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COMMONWEAL

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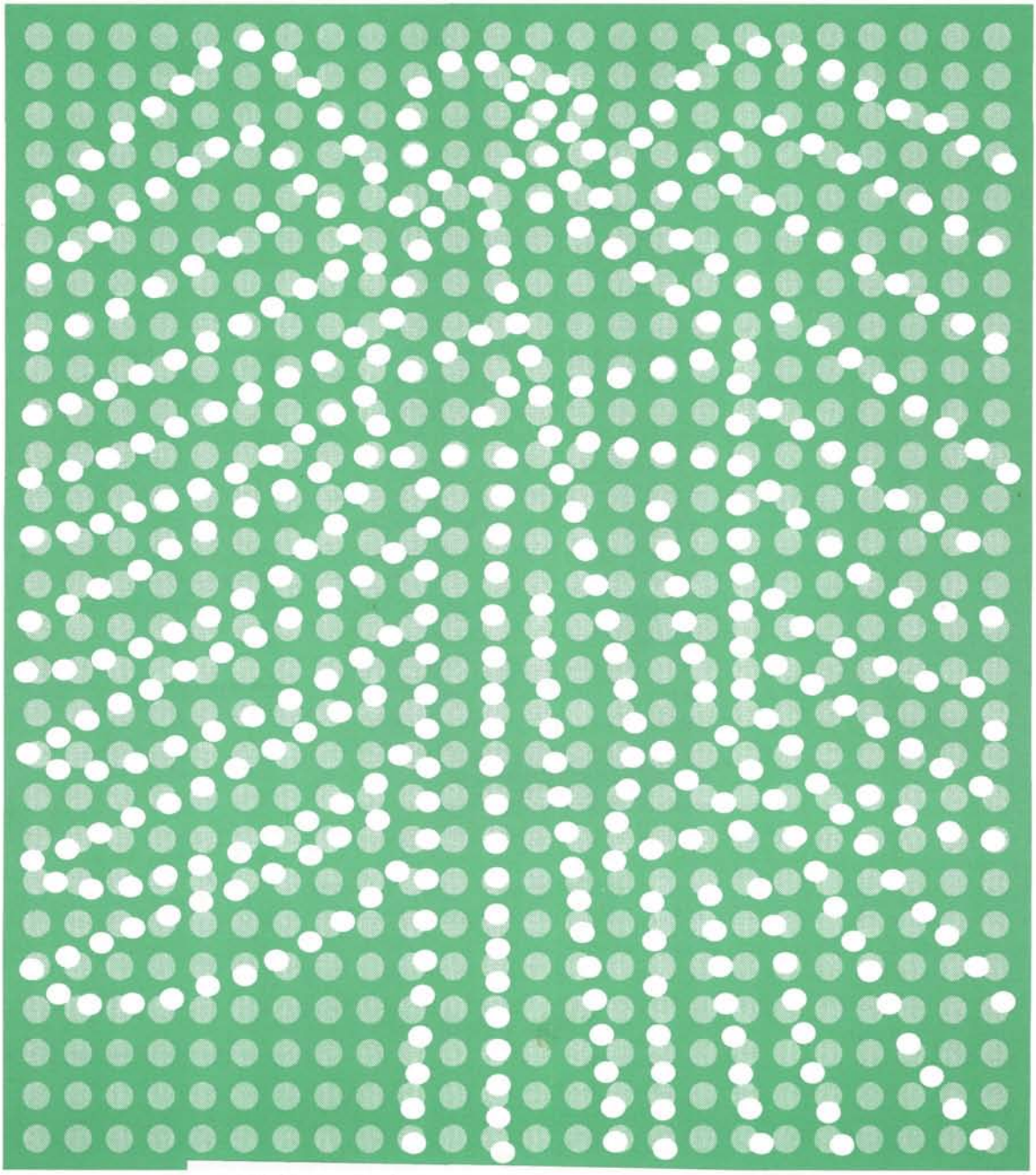
BUMBLING TOWARD BETHLEHEM: Robert G. Hoyt



WAITING FOR LILY: Brian Doyle / BOOKS / SCREEN

DEAD SEA ... yer / SOMALIA

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CORRESPONDENCE

What really happened

Shakopee, Minn.

To the Editors: Thanks for Norman F. Cantor's "The Idea of a Christian Commonwealth" [November 6]. With polemics against the Christian presence these days, it is good to reflect upon what happened in its complexities, learn from what is happening, and not just lament that history was not frozen on a particular date when all was apparently more happy and just.

(REV.) ROBERT HAZEL

Saints as icons

Rock Island, Ill.

To the Editors: Father Richard Mazziotta's article ["When the Saints Went Marching Out," October 23] prompted me to dig out my rather worn copy of Dr. Karl Stern's life story, *The Pillar of Fire* (Harcourt, Brace, 1951). In the last chapter, "Letter to My Brother," he makes this observation on the phenomenon of saints:

"The gospel is always the same. But the life of the gospel in the turmoil of the fourth century is seen in Saint Augustine. The life of the gospel at the height of the Middle Ages...is perceived in Saint Thomas. In the nineteenth century, the century in which the human mind began systematically to rule the material forces of the universe, the church began to extol the Little Way, the mystic life in hidden 'little people.' This is the only logical answer to the threat of a coming managerial age. Christ always has the appropriate answer, and he gives it to his saints."

If Stern's insight is correct, we would do well to recover, in Mazziotta's words, "the church's ancient sense of the saint as icon of Christ." Your author is on target in saying that "the canon [of saints]" should reveal Christ living and dying "in the lives of all the baptized....women as well as men, lay as well as cleric, those from South and East, as well as those of North and West."

(REV.) JERRY LOGAN

Neuhaus on Weakland

New York, N.Y.

To the Editors: I am grateful for Archbishop Rembert G. Weakland's generous words ["Pontifex Maximus Abridged," November 6] on my most recent book, *Doing Well and Doing Good: The Challenge to the Christian Capitalist*. As the one who presided over the production of the 1986 pastoral letter, *Economic Justice for All*, the archbishop perhaps had to overcome a measure of understandable defensiveness, since he believes that my argument is critical of that letter. He cites my statement (not in the book but in a newspaper column) that *Centesimus annus* must prompt "a careful, and perhaps painful, rethinking of the American pastoral." I am a little surprised by the archbishop's unhappiness with that statement, since I have always understood him to be a proponent of careful, indeed painful, rethinking with respect to so many aspects of Catholic faith and life. The archbishop asks, "Were the American bishops so ill-informed?" Of course not. But neither are they seers who could have anticipated what the pope would say six years later.

I am puzzled by his complaint that I embrace a "principle of discontinuity" in Catholic social teaching. Fully two chapters of the book are devoted to explicating continuity in the development of doctrine. I suppose it is possible that the discontinuity that bothers the archbishop may be between *Centesimus annus* and *Economic Justice for All*, although I treat the latter document only in passing. Also curious is the archbishop's claim that John Paul II does not use the terminology of the "new capitalism." I refer the reader to, for instance, section 40 of *Centesimus annus* in which the pope compares "primitive capitalism" with "the new capitalism" that he recommends.

The archbishop is unhappy with my discussion of equality in the pope's argument. He writes: "But, as in previous papal documents on social justice, the key is inequality." Readers of *Centesimus annus* may judge that assertion for themselves. I would only point out that the equality that is mentioned in the encyclical is the equality of opportunity to participate, rather than the equality commonly associated with theories of redistributive justice. Permit me to suggest that those who have problems with that have an argument not with me but with *Centesimus annus*.

I am loath to think that the archbishop is suggesting that I was less than candid when I did not include one of his favored passages (on the need to change lifestyles) in the condensation of the encyclical published as an appendix. Far from hiding that passage, I discuss it in detail in the very text of the book, as is evident in the archbishop's review.

Finally, for all the pleasant things it has to say about my book, the review ends by recommending a Roman interpretation of the encyclical appearing in *La Civiltá Cattolica*. As valuable as that Roman interpretation undoubtedly is, the purpose of *Doing Well and Doing Good* is to understand Catholic social teaching within the context of American problems and possibilities. It is my impression that that is a purpose sometimes championed by the archbishop of Milwaukee.

(REV.) RICHARD JOHN NEUHAUS

(Continued on page 30)

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COMMONWEAL

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A baby named Luck

The aftermath of war, like the aftermath of a great natural disaster, produces a numbing stream of displaced, bewildered people. So it is now at the end of the cold war. While surrogate East-West conflicts have cooled, fierce civil and ethnic conflicts have flamed, startling in both their cruelty and their profusion. *U.S. News & World Report* (November 30) estimates that as the result of the cold war and post-cold wars there are now 18 million refugees in foreign lands and 23 million "displaced persons" in their own countries. In Somalia, on the Horn of Africa, an estimated 2 million of its 8 million people are exiles and 2 million more at home are threatened with starvation. Over 300,000 Somalis have perished in the past year-and-a-half from famine and civil war; the social cohesion of the country is utterly shredded. Whatever power holds sway issues from the muzzle of the gun. It is a power administered increasingly by teen-agers in search of their next meal. Even international relief agencies have been victimized: their supplies stolen and bartered elsewhere for weapons, their vehicles commandeered, their personnel threatened and murdered.

And yet in the last weeks there has developed a flicker of hope for Somalia. In November UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, remarking that the task facing the UN in Somalia was nothing less than "the reconstruction of the entire society and nation," called on the world community for suggestions on how to deal with Somalia's collapse. In response, President George Bush proposed sending up to 30,000 U.S. troops to police the country and to insure the distribution of critical food supplies; and later the White House floated the idea of establishing a temporary UN protectorate in Somalia. It may prove to be one of Bush's finest acts.

Yet neither these headline events nor the searing television coverage of the starving Somalis prepared us for the impact of a small photographic exhibit we saw recently at the UN General Assembly Hall. Titled "The Cry of Somalia," the exhibit is made up of fifty-six photographs, some in color, some black and white, contributed by twenty-three photojournalists. The exhibit tells the story, uninhibited and undiluted, of the human tragedy of Somalia.

We viewed the exhibit in the company of an American missionary recently returned from the Horn of Africa. There were represented rural scenes of war, street-fighting cityscapes, and Somali refugee encampments in Kenya. There were wrenching scenes of grieving Somalis, the haunting face of mass starvation, and a joyous interlude of boys at play. And there were guns—too many guns. The exhibit, our companion said, in no way exaggerated conditions. To us that was alarming; to her it was reassuring. Photographs can lie, but these, she said, are true.

● In one exquisitely colored photograph, for example, taken outside a food distribution center that had just run out of supplies, a long line of people wait for the

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The next issue of *Commonweal* will be dated January 15, 1993.

food that will not now come. Our companion had been forced to turn people away at a dispensary not long ago. She said it had been one of the hardest moments of her life.

- There was a photograph of a frantic young wife, her right palm extended over her dying husband's forehead, her left arm gripping their infant and simultaneously reaching up to her own face, her left hand extending from her open, wailing mouth to her ear in a gesture of abject grief. Our friend had seen this exact expression of despair.
- A young man in a crude operating room, his arms extended as if on a cross, writhes on a gurney of blood and tissue as three attendants struggle to extract shrapnel from his contorted body. Our friend had assisted a similar young man not many months before. The young man had died.
- A boy of ten, his hair turning red, is seen carrying the living carcass of his three-year-old brother. The missioner was quite familiar with red hair and explained its significance: a telltale sign of malnutrition.
- And a group of boys at a refugee center, avidly playing with toy trucks made from food tins, pushing them with sticks, like Victorian children pushing hoops. Our companion described seeing such children, replenished from the food they had received in a refugee center, fashioning the tin for the wheels.
- And there were the madonnas. On the eve of Advent, they could not have been more poignant. There was one woman at a makeshift hospital in Baidoa. She held her two-day-old infant with the stump of her left arm as her right hand fell listlessly from the cot. The woman's left leg was missing entirely.
- There was a mother breastfeeding her child in a refugee center in Mogadishu (the capital); where it had not been shaved, the child's hair was red. This pair, a caption read, were lucky. They had arrived at an Australian center adequately equipped to help them.
- And finally, a baby being born on the road to Kenya. As the mother lay on the ground surrounded by five women, a Kenyan woman cut the umbilical cord with a knife lent by the photographer. The baby's name was "Luck."

Images alter our consciousness. In a true sense, they are sacramental. We may forget them, return to life as we habitually live it and know it; but somewhere in the accumulated growth rings of our psyche a searing mark remains. And given the longevity of memory, and its power, that burr may yet play its part in our lives and those of others.

The psalmist says the nations of the earth have conspired against the Lord and against his anointed. The anarchic powers in Somalia and the faint-hearted response of the rest of the world have conspired against the people of Somalia. Only now is the world beginning to act, impelled belatedly by Secretary General Boutros-Ghali and, perhaps, in some small way by the photo exhibit in the General Assembly Hall. The necessary steps to peace in Somalia should begin with the placement of UN-sponsored forces charged with disarming the warring factions and policing the country. Already several Somali warlords have sent out messages welcoming U.S. and UN forces.

In the fourth century, the Christian theologian and bishop, Saint Athanasius, compared the Incarnation itself to such an act of reordering and restoration. "You know how it is when some great king enters a large city and dwells in one of its houses; because of his dwelling in that single house, the whole city is honored, and enemies and robbers cease to molest it. Even so is it with the King of all; he has come into our country...and put an end to death."

Somalia, Sudan. Bosnia, Cambodia, South Africa: all need such divine intervention now. But it will happen only if the world's people first open their eyes and hearts to prepare for it. There is no better season in which to begin.

AN EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

DEWEY REMEMBERED

BUMBLING TOWARD BETHLEHEM

His full name was Carlyn P. Dewey, but everybody, including his wife Anna, called him Dewey. His firstborn, Mary Anne, gave a reading at his funeral that was taken from the book of Job, the part in which Yahweh asks his servant where he was when Yahweh laid the earth's foundations, decided its dimensions, dammed up the sea; whether lightning flashes will come at Job's command, whether it is Job that makes the horse so brave and causes the eagle to soar. Job answers, "I have spoken once, I shall not speak again; I have spoken twice, I shall not speak again."

What made the reading exactly right was that Job in fact did speak again, and again. So did Dewey; he was a humble man, but he gave the Lord a lot of lip. He did the same for the president, whoever it was, for the postmaster general (he was a letter carrier much of his life), for the successive mayors of Kansas City, Missouri—for anybody who could right wrongs or help the needy and didn't, including me (I was, for a while, his boss, in a sense, and, in a way, his landlord). Good and faithful and insistent servant that he was, I'm sure he had no trouble getting Yahweh's full attention; he also knew how to get through to earthly powers. Once he sent a postcard—to the White House, I think—that was made of plywood, measured four feet by eight feet, and cost something like forty dollars in postage. The story made the wire services and ran in papers across the

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country. Dewey often made news on purpose, sometimes by accident; a Kansas City *Star* photographer once caught him unawares giving away his overcoat to someone on the street. He bugged the *Star* at all times; I'm sure he was a pain; but on being told that Dewey was gravely ill, the *Star*'s editor arrived at the hospital in ten minutes.

Dewey's youngest daughter, Bernadine, gave a eulogy that seemed artless but was heartwrenching. He knew himself as an ordinary bloke, a little guy, but he did things on a large scale. That includes his family: besides M.A. and B., there were Elizabeth (Dady), Cecilia, Joseph, and John. Bernadine recalled that when he built a kite for his kids (and mine) it was *huge* and its tail was *long*; when it was ready he piled them all into his beat-up car and took them to Swope Park. The string broke, the kite sailed off—with Dewey and the kids in the car in instant pursuit across the city. When Dewey installed a swing on the ancient elm in our yard it was strung from a *very* high branch; riding it was like soaring.

What he or his family needed but couldn't buy he invented. Not all the inventions worked, but he bumbled away, made do, eked out. Fourth of July rockets were out of the question, so he tied sparklers to arrows and shot them into the night sky. To celebrate the Feast of Saint Nicholas in proper style Dewey arranged to hire a horse, donned a robe of sorts, put a homemade episcopal miter on his head, and came riding up our driveway bearing gifts, just like the good bishop. He was late, the horse was skittish, we all nearly froze waiting for him on the porch, but Saint Nick became more real than Santa Claus.

He was a Catholic of his times, the fervent forties; he knew about the Young Christian Workers, Friendship House, the Catholic Worker, *Integrity*, priest-workers in France; when he learned that a group of us, even more impractical dreamers than he, were trying to start a Catholic daily paper in Kansas City he first volunteered to help, then quit the Post Office and joined the staff, using his postal lore to help run circulation. The *Sun Herald* did get launched but folded after five months, and he went back to his old job. It's more than likely that he knew the griefs and sufferings of everyone on his route, and helped where he could.

Before Dewey died I had seen him very seldom over a span of forty years. I first felt tears when I learned he had spoken of me often on his death bed, and that he had always prayed for me. I cried again when the funeral director, obeying Mary Anne, opened the casket for me and for an old black woman who, like me, had not been at the rosary the night before. Dewey's eighty-four-year-old face was as handsome as ever; what made me cry were his gnarled and calloused hands. Dewey loved the Latin, so we sang the *Kyrie*, the *Sanctus*, and the *Agnus Dei*. I cried some more then, and when I saw his widow weeping. Anna was his perfect wife: dry, practical, witty, tolerant of this holy fool; living with a saint requires a supersaint. Anna, to my knowledge, seldom wept, but now she had good reason; she had lost him. I had other reasons. I realized, at last, that I was crying for myself. I had neglected him, and disappointed him; I was not enough like him. I hope he's still praying.

ROBERT G. HOYT

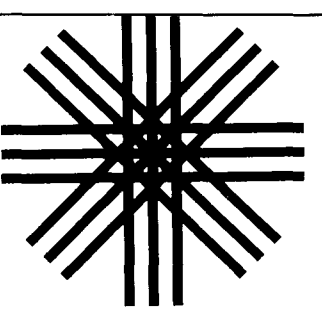
THE NIGHT WATCH

WAITING FOR LILY

BY THE LIGHT OF THE SILVERY MOON

I am sitting in my childbirth class carefully not watching a film. My wife is watching. I hear her gasp in horror as a French baby splashes out of a Frenchwoman. The Frenchwoman, thanks to the magic of cinema, has had the same baby a thousand times since the film was made in 1971. I take a quick peek between my fingers at the sole moment in the thirty-three-minute film when I do not hear light screaming from the Frenchwoman. As I do so the baby pops out with a wet sound. The doctor pulls gently, with a practiced touch, and holds the baby up to the camera. It's a girl, and we stare at each other for a moment before I cover my eyes again and she blindly gropes for her first meal.

On the way home I think about girls. The French girl in the film is now over twenty, I realize, and has certainly had a little



THE GRAYMOOR PRIZE

Bound by tradition and custom, the COMMONWEAL editors have once again awarded the Graymoor Prize to two authors. Our winners this year are Judith Banki of New York City for reflections prompted by two conferences that hoped to further Jewish/Christian dialogue, and Anthea Dove, who lives in the town of Whitby on the north Yorkshire coast in England. Ms. Dove described the meeting and reconciliation initiated by a former British bomber pilot between his own congregation in Yorkshire and the people of a church he had destroyed in Kleve, Germany, in World War II. The $1,000 prize has been divided between the two winners. The essays will be published in our January 15, 1993 issue.

We would like to thank all those who submitted manuscripts for this year's prize, and we would especially like to thank the Friars of the Atonement for sponsoring the essay contest, which has the important goal of encouraging new ecumenical ideas and perspectives.

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chat with her parents about her early appearance in a skin flick. Chances are that she has a lover, maybe a husband. Puberty arrived years ago. She may be finishing college. She may be working, pregnant, a mother, broken-hearted, stood up, left alone, beautiful, arrogant, gentle, in love, confused, brilliant, or dead. I think of her father, who stood dazedly by his wife, holding her hand, brushing away wet strands of hair from her forehead. He forgot to smile at the camera when his daughter was born, I noticed. The mother grinned, the doctor beamed, the nurses preened, the baby was proffered like a trophy, but the father stood there in a daze, mechanically brushing away strands of hair.

I helped my wife into bed that night, lowering her gently into place, constructing a tower of pillows around her. She fell asleep with unusual speed. In her belly our child was restless, and I watched the undulating skin, the tiny mobile mountains of my child's elbows and feet. I think it is a girl, because so many women tell us it is a boy. If it is a boy, we might name him Joseph, an honest name, a name carved from wood. If it is a girl we may name her Lily, for beauty.

I watch Lily's right foot move across my wife's stomach. It courses from east to west and stops. My wife, who has grown accustomed to her restless tenant, sleeps on. Lily rolls over, her foot rippling back from west to east. I think of her feet. Now they are the size of my thumbs. In ten years they will be shod by sneakers; in twenty years they will be in high heels. I will be fifty-five years old then.

There are many nights, just now before Lily arrives, when I help my wife into bed and then sit in the dark watching mother and daughter. I am having trouble sleeping, and sitting in the dark relaxes me. Sometimes I sit there for a couple of hours. The moon slants through the fir trees in my yard and spangles against the wall.

Lily, I want to say, Lily, I have so many things to tell you I don't know where to start. The world is so sad and so hauntingly beautiful. People are savage and holy, Lily, and nothing will hurt you as much as your lovers and heaven is here in the love of your friends and family. There are many gods and they all have one name, which is Nameless. Your mother and I met late in life and your birth made me cry. I stood there dazed, brushing the wet hair from your mother's face. I love your mother more than I can tell you. Wisdom is in the heart and the heart is cruel. We are only people, poor and fragile. Humor is mercy. Once there was a carpenter who was dragged to the edge of a dusty town and killed; he might actually have been a god. Once my mother found my brother dead. His soul remains in her heart. Touch as many things with your gentle fingers as you can and remember them all because they will pass and they are all holy.

I tell you this so you will know. I like to tell stories. Stories are small prayers. Many things are prayers: floating hawks, unfurled flags, river music, the flash of wrens in a thicket. In some sense, all things pray by being themselves; evil things are empty. One of your grandfathers built a house with his hands and died within the walls he loved so. Once I sat wrapped in the dark and waited for you. There was a moon caught in huge trees. Your mother slept, her face open and innocent, her hair cascading across her forehead. You were rolling in her belly. Your hands wrote runes on her skin. The moon wrote silver words on the wall. I waited for who you would be. We are only people, Lily, poor and fragile people, and we play with evil as with a toy. But within us are worlds without end. I waited my whole life to tell you what I cannot put in words. Once there was a moon and you danced in water and I sat in the dark and thought my heart would burst. Remember me; I held you close when you first entered the world. It was in the autumn, under a lovely silver moon.

BRIAN DOYLE

Brian Doyle is editor of Portland Magazine, *published by the University of Portland. And he is indeed the father of a girl named Lily.*

THE WAY OF A PILGRIM

MALCOLM AFTER MECCA

EAST AFRICA, 1964

I met Malcolm X in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, during his second extended visit to Africa, not long before his brief life ended. In the books I have seen there is only passing mention of his 1964 meetings with African heads of state and ambassadors, and little at all about other meetings. I can tell you about one of them.

It was a Quaker friend, an African-American, who told me that Malcolm X would visit Dar es Salaam and urged me to meet him. To what end, I asked? I then told Bill about my first encounter with Malcolm X, at a United Nations reception in New York a year or so earlier. There, Malcolm was unyielding; there was no way that he would use his considerable leadership skills to involve whites as well as blacks in the struggle against injustice. In his world scenario there were no positive roles for whites. Given that experience, was there anything further for me to discuss with Mr. X?

My friend was not put off. Malcolm had been transformed at Mecca, he said; I would profit personally from exchanging views with him, and Malcolm himself would gain from meeting not just Africans and black Americans but people like me, white Americans working in Africa with Africans. Under Bill's persuasion, I softened my stand: If I *happened* to meet Mr. X, and *he* wanted to talk, I would talk.

Later that day I headed for a phone booth on the veranda of the old New Africa Hotel. Occupied. By whom? Malcolm X hung up the phone, smiled, introduced himself. Some four hours later, we finished talking.

Malcolm X told me how his *hadj*—his pilgrimage to Mecca—had transformed him, and how his conversations with African presidents like Julius Nyerere of Tanzania and Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya had enriched him. The two neighboring countries had widely disparate British colonial histories, and, consequently, starkly different independence struggles: Tanzania's was a tri-

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umph of reason, Kenya's a revolution. Malcolm X appreciated Nyerere's perspective that his country's argument with the former colonial master was with the British government, not with the British people. And he was in awe of Kenyatta's capacity to come to an understanding with Kenya's white settler-farmers, and to gain their great respect. Malcolm marveled most that both presidents were free of racial animosity.

Now, despite our earlier encounter, I could see no trace of racism remaining in Malcolm X. The impact of Mecca and of his meetings with African leaders, enhanced by his unique ability to assimilate ideas and viewpoints, was profound.

Something else happened. He began to see his struggle for justice as reaching past the issue of American civil rights to that of global human rights. He became an internationalist. More strikingly, he was in awe of and wonder at *humanness*—at the very existence and potential of the human person. To him now, there was one single human nature possessed by blacks, whites, and others.

I have never, before or since, met a person with so incisive a mind or so great a capacity to ask probing questions and to learn what moved people. Responding to his questions, I explained that this was my third year in Africa (the years would later add up to thirteen); and that I was there out of concerns for justice and fairness that were planted in me by my parents, my educators, and my Christian faith.

I was not to see Malcolm X again; just weeks later, he was assassinated. Still, from that one meeting, I knew that at the end of his life, Malcolm wanted all of us to join in making the world a better place, more human and more humane, and that he was in a hurry. "Anything I do today," he said, "I regard as urgent. No man is given but so much time to accomplish whatever is his life's work" (*Autobiography*, p. 378). Amen to that.

MARGARET SNYDER

Margaret Snyder, founding director of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), is a visiting fellow at the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton University.

OF SEVERAL MINDS David R. Carlin, Jr.

LESSONS FROM NOVEMBER

FRAYING THE BONDS

From where I sit, where I am in possession of what is, I admit, a parochial point of view, the worst thing that happened in November's election was that I was soundly defeated in my race for Congress. But I'll tell you about that some other day.

The second worst thing was the strong showing of Ross Perot, close to 20 percent of the popular vote, since this is one further sign of the dissolution of American political parties. The rapid erosion of George Bush's popularity (it actually resembled a drop off a cliff more than an erosion), which went from 90-percent approval rating at the close of the Gulf War in early 1991 to a less than 40-percent vote on election day, is another sign of the same thing.

Some commentators have remarked that Perot's percentage of the vote was the highest for a third-party candidate since Theodore Roosevelt ran as the Progressive (or "Bull Moose") party candidate in 1912. But they are mistaken, for Perot was not a third-party candidate. He was a no-party candidate. That's what is so alarming.

If Perot had been a third-party candidate, the big vote for him might be a sign of the breakdown of one or both of the major parties. That would be a momentous development, certainly, but it would be neither unprecedented nor catastrophic. The Whig party broke down in the 1850s, to be replaced by the new Republican party, whereupon the two-party system continued with a new player. But the Perot phenomenon appears to be the sign of the breakdown of the two-party system itself.

"So what?" some will say. "What's so sacred about the two-party system? Political parties may have been necessary in earlier times, when citizens were not so well educated and informed as they are today. Perhaps back then they needed parties to guide their political thinking. Fine. But those days are gone forever. We are living in a brave new world of computers and fiber optics. We have learned how to

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think for ourselves. We can and should vote for the person, not the party."

Maybe. But I wonder. I am far from certain that our political intelligence is greater today than it was, say, among the audiences who listened to the Lincoln-Douglas debates. And how about that audience a couple of months ago at Cooper Union in New York City, who shouted down Governor Robert Casey of Pennsylvania, not allowing him to speak on abortion (the second time this year Casey was not allowed to speak in New York on this topic)? Were they more enlightened than Lincoln's Cooper Union audience in 1860?

I grow anxious when I consider that there is no example of a modern nation which has been a stable democracy in the absence of a multiparty system, usually a two- or three-party system. Thus we may reasonably ask: Is the slow dissolve of our party system the first stage in the collapse of American democracy?

The retreat from party loyalties and identities is an example of a more generalized retreat that has taken place in recent decades; a retreat from religious loyalties and identities is another example. The retreat from marriage and family is still another.

I suspect these three, plus others that might be mentioned, are parts of a package. They all go together; and if we are to evaluate the merits of the dissolution of political parties, we will have to do this as part of a broader evaluation of the merits of this generalized retreat from the old particularisms.

In no case has the old institution simply been repudiated. Political parties continue to exist, and so do religions, and so do families. But in each case the individual is less tightly bound to the institution. He or she wears the institutional garment more loosely, is more able to slip out of it if it becomes uncomfortable. While we may enter these institutions with both feet, we stand near the door in case we have to make a quick getaway. The individual is less likely to define himself or herself in terms of institutional memberships or loyalties. Nowadays the hardcore Democrat or Republican is more difficult to find; and so is the hardcore Protestant or Catholic or Jew; and so is the hardcore husband or wife.

It is as if people are saying: "Yes, I happen to be a Catholic or a Democrat or a spouse. But I am so much more than any of these. None of these roles or attachments constitutes the essential me. The real me transcends all roles and loyalties. That's why, though I have no immediate plans to leave my church or my party or spouse, I could readily do so without ceasing to be myself."

This is radical individualism, but an individualism compatible with universalism, as though our hypothetical speaker were to continue his or her speech thus: "Because I transcend all my roles and loyalties, I am not ultimately divided from my fellow human beings. In our particularisms we are separate from one another, but at the level of our true selves we are capable of solidarity. For in the last analysis we are not members of institutions; we are members of the human race."

This sounds good, and when I hear it the Kantian in me nods in vigorous agreement, and so does the Christian in me. But when it comes to particularisms, human nature seems to abhor a vacuum. Instead of the retreat from the old particularisms having led to an outburst of universalistic solidarity, we find that new particularisms are growing faster than the old ones are dying out. Racial and ethnic and sexual identities are aggressively asserted. Multiculturalism—which is to say, multiparticularism—is the order of the day. The evil of particularism, if evil it be, having been thrown out the door, has returned through the windows.

I have my doubts that this exchange of old particularisms for new is such a good deal. At least the churches and the political parties preached universalistic values if they did not always practice them. But the new particularisms neither preach nor practice universalism. We are like the man who, having swept his house clean of the old devils, finds that an even greater number of new devils have come to dwell in the empty house. □

OF SEVERAL MINDS John Garvey

WE ARE ALL FOREIGNERS

RELIGION, NATION & RACE

When I was in college, a couple of years before Bill Clinton didn't inhale, it was assumed among progressive people (I aspired then to be one) that nationalism was dead, and that racial and religious divisions were on their way to the ash-heaps of history. We would evolve towards an accommodation with Communist nations which would give all the societies involved the best of all the forms of government swarming toward this great reconciliation: capitalist societies would learn the communal virtues of socialism: Communist societies would loosen up and grant more individual freedom. It was a happy, naive, and shallow vision. It deserved to die because it was so stupid.

This has been obvious in a dreadful way in what was Yugoslavia. Patriarch Pavle of the Orthodox church and Roman Catholic Cardinal Franjo Kuharic of Zagreb, at a meeting in Geneva in September, called for the suspension of all violence, the end of the destruction of Orthodox, Catholic, and Muslim places of worship, the release of all hostages and prisoners of war, the closure of all prison camps, the end of "the inhuman practice of ethnic cleansing, on whatever side it began." It was a firm, moving, unequivocal rejection of forces that have animated Serbs and Croats who claim to be Christians, and it was, of course, ignored, for the same reason that Christianity has always been ignored: it is easier to use a religion than to listen to it, and something similar applies to nation and to race.

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Obviously these are three very different things. Religion is a matter of choice. Race is not, in most cases, but even that, as we will see, is not so clear. Nationhood is even trickier. All claim ancient sanctions of a sort; all involve collective, if slippery, memories.

I spoke not too long ago with a Serb who was clearly in favor of the bloodshed. I didn't understand the grievances, he said: I needed to understand, and as a naive American never could, how they justified everything that was happening now. I didn't appreciate how the Serbs had suffered at the hands of the evil Croats during World War II. But I do know how horrible the Croats often were, and Serbs and Croats often now are. I can read. Still, he reminded me too much of someone closer to home, of an Irish-American man I had talked to in a bar a few years before, who was trying to convince me that the IRA bombing campaigns in England, and all of their behavior in Ireland, were all right. I was accused by him of what I can only call insufficient Irish-ism, a lack of the right kind of passion. The Serb (like the Irishman) claimed to be a Christian. I said approximately the same thing to both: we had no quarrel as long as they admitted that being Serbian, or Irish, was finally much more important to them than trying to be a follower of Christ. There were no grounds for argument, if they said as much. I was accused, both times, of idealism.

Now, as an Irish-American who has studied a bit of our history I am far from being an Anglophile. A certain sort of Brit accent or "oh, *re*ally?" inflection is, all by itself, enough to make me understand something that animates the bombers, without approving it. I have to understand in myself here the beginning movement of those small indulged angers that can lead to still small, merely verbal and mental violences that at first seem harmless, and somewhere down the line mean blood on a sidewalk. There is a history of injustice and oppressive violence that is as real as any geological formation, but looking at it too long turns the heart to stone. Of course it is true, and it is unjustifiable. In some cases (the English in Ireland, any European nation in Africa) it is clearly a matter of colonialism: the only claim is that one power was able to coerce the other, with no right other than the right of plunder. In other competing arguments (Jews and Arabs in the Middle East) the claims become more complex. In either case the identification with something collective (being a Serb, being Irish, being Palestinian, being a Jew) becomes so important that—for too many people who make a certain leap—any indecency is excused, because of all the horrible things that were done to us.

What isn't seen often enough, beyond the claim of nationhood, is how recent the idea of the nation-state is. There have been nations forever in human history, but the belief that a nation has a *right* to a specific territory simply by virtue of being a nation, a territory defined not only by a common story and language but by mappable borders, a common currency, and a central government, first became virulent only as late as the nineteenth century when, undergirded by romanticism, it spread throughout Europe and began to infect the rest of the world. (An argument could be made that Lord Byron's Hellenism and Pol Pot's genocide in Cambodia are not all that far apart, ideologically.) It existed as a weird flowering for a century or a little less, was deep-frozen by World War I and the Russian Revolution, and with the death of communism has only now thawed and is showing itself in what was Yugoslavia, in the former Soviet Union, and in the resurgence of a Nazi hatred of the other (now the other seems more commonly to be Turkish than Jewish) in reunited Germany.

"Don't misunderstand: I'm not putting down the Swiss. It's just that, compared with some other groups, they don't strike me as being very ethnic."

America has had an ideological commitment, violated at almost every turn, to a vision of society which is classless, not racist, and egalitarian. Race, of course, continues to haunt us. It is dealt with as if it had ontological weight: to be black is to be *essentially* different, a belief shared by some black writers and entertainers with white racists. But our situation has been artificially created. Race has *become* this, for us; it isn't a matter of essential differences. My wife is Asian, and we once met someone who told us that she didn't believe in interracial marriage. When we pointed out to her, as gently as we could, that what she was saying was offensive to us, she said, "I'm not talking about *you*. Filipinos are white." Race, for her, was us (everyone who was not black) as distinct from them (everyone who was). In a recent, very good *Harper's* article on Malcolm X, Gerald Early writes of black students who are the offspring of mixed marriages—and it occurred to me that my children have never been forced to think of themselves *primarily* as Asian or Irish-American; they are both, and have not been forced to identify with one side of the family to the exclusion of the other. It is antiblack racism that forces people to think of themselves primarily as black, or white. Black pride is at one level a healthy reaction to racism, but (like Serbian pride, Irish pride, or white pride) it can be as ugly as what it opposes.

Where Christians confront any of these things they must remember the ancient letter to Diognetus, in which it is said that Christians "live in their own countries, but only as aliens. They have a share in everything as citizens, and endure everything as foreigners. Every foreign land is their fatherland, and yet for them every fatherland is a foreign land." We must remember that we are not to accept any of the identities urged on us by culture and, too frequently, by religious habit. "Our lives are hidden in Christ," and we must wear any other identity pretty lightly, no matter how important the culture tells us it is to see ourselves as having some worth based on the mere fact of being Irish, Serbian, straight, gay, white, black, or American. □

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WISE GUYS

THEIR GIFTS WERE PERFECT

JOHN SHEA

In the midsixties a Roman Catholic cardinal and a priest Scripture scholar found themselves seated at the same table at a dinner party. The cardinal immediately put forth his grievance. "You know, Father, there are some Scripture scholars these days who are saying we don't know how many Magi there were."

"I am not one of them," replied the scholar.

"I am glad to hear that..."

"There were six."

"Six!" blustered the cardinal. "How do you figure six?"

"Well, in the reliquary at Cologne there are the heads of three wise men and in the reliquary at Milan there are the heads of three wise men. Three plus three equal six."

Although this anecdote is probably fictional, it gets big laughs when academics gather. I don't know if anyone has told it at a bishops' meeting.

The number of Magi is not given in Matthew's account. In Christian imagination they have ranged from two to a whole cohort. But in most of Nativity art, from earliest times to the present, there are three. It seems natural that three gifts should have three carriers. Can all those crib sets be wrong?

Of course, the original story in Matthew is the touchstone text. It is a tale steeped in irony, laden with symbols, and rich in theological associations. However, the popular Christian tradition never felt unduly tied to Matthew's text. The story became more a springboard for the imagination than an anchor for sober reflection. In a generous estimate, it might be said that the original story initiated a trajectory of concerns that later elaborations developed. However, a more accurate appraisal might be that the Magi of popular poetry and story are more indebted to the concerns of Christian faith in general than to the dynamics of the brief tale in Matthew. In Matthew's story the Magi came primarily to worship; in subsequent tradition they rode again, driven by desires not far from any human heart.

G.K. Chesterton wrote an essay on three modern Wise Men. They journeyed to a city of peace, a new Bethlehem. They wanted to enter this city and proffered their gifts as passports of admission. The first put forth cold gold and suggested it could buy the pleasures of the earth. The second did not carry frankincense. He brought instead the modern scent of chemistry. The scent has the power to drug the mind, seed the soil, and control the population. The third brought myrrh in the shape of a split atom. It was the symbol of death for anyone who opposed the ways of peace.

When they arrived at the palace of peace, they met Saint Joseph. He refused them entrance. They protested, "What more could we possibly need to assure peace? We have the means to provide affluence, control nature, and destroy enemies." Saint Joseph whispered in the ear of each individually. They went away sad. He told them that they had forgotten the child.

This tale is a critique of contemporary wisdom. The Wise Men come with the benefits of wealth and technology, and they think that those assets will bring peace. The story is suspicious of these gifts, but it does not deprecate them. It views them neutrally, suggesting that in themselves they will not provide access to the city of peace. The real problem is not what the modern Wise Men have brought, but what they have not brought. They have forgotten the child.

"Typical—the first Christmas and we have to spend it away from home."

THE REVEREND JOHN SHEA *is professor of systematic theology at Mundelein Seminary. This article is excerpted, with permission, from his most recent book,* Starlight: Beholding the Christmas Miracle All Year Long *(Crossroad, $17.95, 192 pp.).*

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The enigmatic symbol of the child points to the missing ingredient of modern wisdom. The child image pushes the mind and heart in many directions. It is difficult to know which path will prove productive. It seems that Chesterton's concern is that the modern mind for all its sheer knowledge is divorced from something very simple. The Wise Men need the baby to save them from their own knowledge. They need to enter into the house where Mary and the child are or else they will journey forever over the earth and never be at home. When they worship the God who lives on the earth, the mind that studies the sky will be saved.

The Magi are searchers. They are looking for the Christ child, but they do not have exact directions and they cannot travel by day. A star leads them, a tiny point in a night sky. Their quest is mainly darkness and minimally light. They are manipulated by Herod and become unwitting accomplices in a horrible slaughter. They rejoice at their find and they present their gifts worshipfully, but they leave quickly and return home by another route. Darkness and danger are more a part of their lives than joy and worship.

Their situation is often contrasted with that of the shepherds. The shepherds do not have to deal with a mute star. They are blessed with a very talkative angel. This angel gives them exact direction to the birthplace of the child. They will not have to consult devious kings. They are also told the identity of the child and serenaded with a song about the meaning of his birth. Once they arrive everything is exactly as they were told. They skip off to tell everyone, and to a person everyone is astonished at what they hear. Angelic revelation, joy, and proclamation tell the shepherds' story.

We may yearn to enter into the Christmas mystery with the simplicity and directness of a shepherd, but often the struggling Magi are our real representatives. Their struggle is characterized in many ways. Evelyn Waugh sees in their journey the vacillations of the learned: "How laboriously you came, taking sights and calculating, where shepherds had run barefoot!...Yet you came, and were not turned away....For his sake who did not reject your curious gifts, pray always for the learned, the oblique, the delicate. Let them not be forgotten at the Throne of God when the simple come into their Kingdom."

"Taking sights and calculating" is a tame estimation of the Magi's journey. William Butler Yeats sees it as an endless, unsatisfied passion to ground our "thrashing about" in mystery. However it is rendered, the Magi are symbols of the restless human spirit, of the unseeing quests we undertake and, more often than not, the unlikely finds we discover.

Following Christ costs. This is a Gospel theme that is stressed and restressed. Jesus' parables of the buried treasure and the pearl suggest that finding and selling go together; "going, he sold all that he had...." To follow Jesus one must leave occupation and family. This is not so much a literal leaving as a symbolic detachment. Choosing a new absolute point of reference entails letting go of previous absolutes. To walk a new path we must leave the old path. This emphasis on detachment is not only insisted on in the gospel, it seems to be the commonsense consequence of freedom.

Yet the inevitability of this painful process always stuns us. We are always taken by surprise that this newborn child wants whatever gifts we have. On the positive side, this means redirecting our energies toward whatever is coming to birth in him. On the negative side, it means letting go of other gods. This birth of Christ brings the awareness that we are alien people clutching gods.

When people attempt to summarize the revelation of Christianity, they often talk in terms of reconciliation. The divisions within people, between people, between people and the earth, and between people and God have been overcome. There is a new sense of communion. What was divided is not seen to be in a new, life-giving relationship. Communion has replaced separation. This awareness of communion includes claiming aspects of ourselves and others we had previously pushed away.

This theme of communion and the overcoming of separation appears in some of the poetry about the Magi. In W.H. Auden's Christmas oratorio, *For the Time Being*, the Wise Men and the shepherds both appear at the manger. Their voices are initially contrasted. The Wise Men talk of hunting high and low, traveling with doubt and the unknown, and finally finding an ending to their endless journey at the manger. The shepherds are the opposite. They talk of traveling nowhere, living in uninterrupted routine, and finding a beginning of their journey at the manger. They represent different types of people, but also they refer to different dimensions of each person.

For both these human types the birth of Christ is a refusal and a blessing. The Wise Men desire to have no past and the shepherds no future. These desires are refused, but it is noted that Love has used these escapist tendencies as a "guard and a

Erica Mapp

The Bouquet

Van Gogh, 1887, Paris

Aster: a star that shines out of the dark;
Asteriskos: a little star to mark
The word* as it is written on the page
To draw attention to a passage;
Something is missing here; it is to come.
Asterismos: a starring, three in one;
Configurations of three stars appear
That we might pay special attention there.
Chrys is the gold and flower *anthenum*, ***
Intensely read, the red *Geranium*
And the pink stork's bill, *Pelargonium*,
Bring to my mind the open-mouthed stork,
He who announces Spring (as from a beak).
The light, the word, the bird...the urge to speak.

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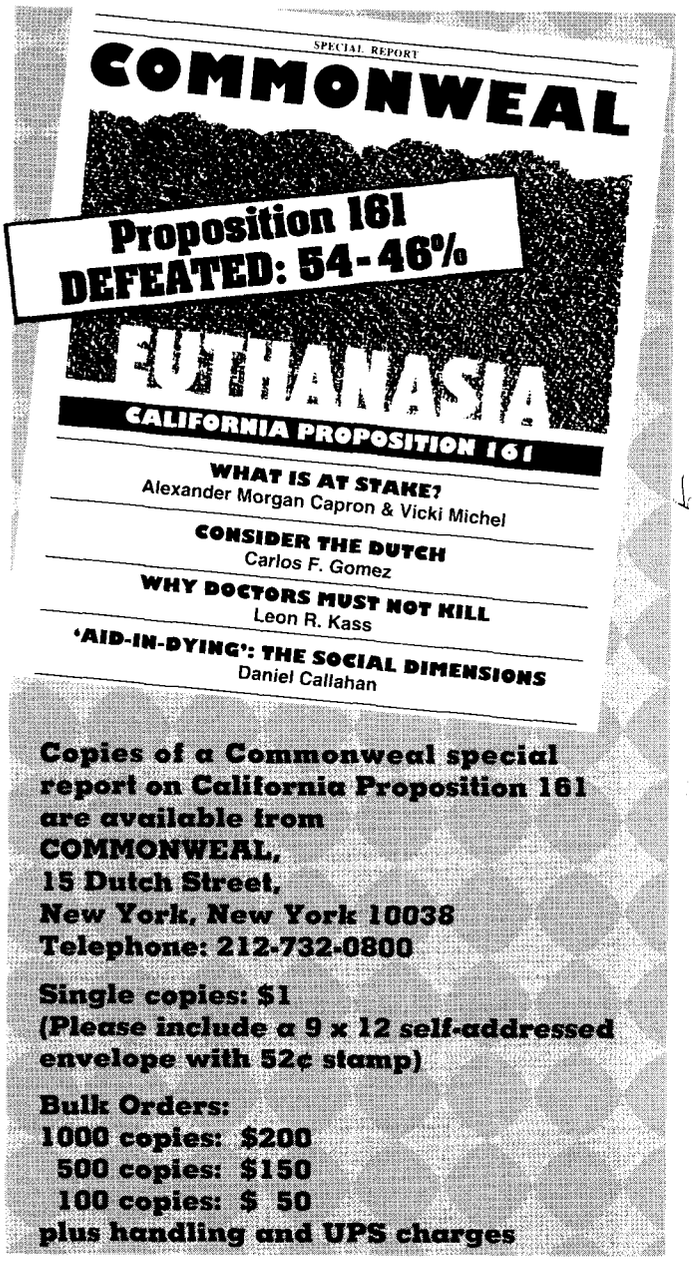
Life & death in California



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guide." Instead they are both asked to bless their overriding drives, the Magi their impatience and the shepherds their laziness. Then they bless each other's sin and exchange places. The Wise Men give away their exceptional conceit and the shepherds their average fear.

G. K. Chesterton once took issue with Mary Baker Eddy, the founder of the Christian Scientists. Mrs. Eddy told the press that at Christmas she did not give presents in any gross, material sense. Rather she meditated on Truth and Purity till all her friends were better for it. Chesterton accused her of being anti-Christian. The whole point of the Incarnation was to embody good will. "The Three Kings came to Bethlehem bringing gold and frankincense and myrrh. If they had only brought Truth and Purity and Love there would have been no Christian art and no Christian civilization." Chesterton goes on to argue that Christ himself was a Christmas present, a real embodiment of divine love.

Therefore, gift giving is the way the invisible becomes visible, the way the hidden heart is made known, the way spirit risks itself in substantiation. The gift giving that is associated with the birth of Christ is not gross, but spiritual activity of the highest order.

In Christian tradition the gifts of the Wise Men have become symbols of the perfect gifts. What makes them perfect is their ability to bear and communicate spirit. On the one hand, the gifts show that the Magi know who the child is. The gold symbolizes his kingly humanity, the frankincense his divinity, and the myrrh (an ointment used in embalming) foreshadows his redemptive death. They are not fooled by the outer trappings. Their gifts show they discern his inner reality.

On the other hand, poets have interpreted the gifts as symbols of the Magi's inner dispositions. Gold means that they offer their virtues, frankincense shows them to be people of prayer, and myrrh represents their willingness to sacrifice. The outer gifts tell of their inner reality. What is hidden is revealed. Their gifts are perfect because they allow communication between two interiors; the hearts of the Magi reach the heart of the child. The perfect gift is one that carries one person into another person.

Each age reads Scripture out of its own concerns. This is doubly true of the imaginative explorations of the Magi story.

We live in a time in which our rational mind is so powerful it could trigger our extinction. No wonder the Magi become warnings to recover the child.

We live in a time in which we are sensitive to tasks of life that are built into the structure of aging. No wonder the Magi represent the stages of life.

We live in a time between times, a time of glacial shifts of consciousness. No wonder the Magi's search is hard and their find both less and more than what they expected.

We live in a time in which our preoccupation with the materiality of all lives threatens to shrivel our sense of spirit. No wonder the Magi know that matter is the secret communication of spirit. ☐

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WHAT THEY FOUND IN THE CAVES

LET'S GO TO THE SCROLLS

JOSEPH A. FITZMYER

As a biblical scholar, I can testify that the Dead Sea Scrolls are of the utmost importance to our understanding of the origins of Christianity. But even I was somewhat taken back by the significance attached to the Scrolls in a recent supermarket tabloid: "A nuclear disaster will leave millions dead or homeless and America will find itself going to war in 1992, according to predictions gleaned from the mysterious Dead Sea Scrolls....the scrolls include eye-popping predictions for top celebrities like Kevin Costner and Madonna" (*Sun*, February 18, 1992).

How did the Dead Sea Scrolls, the fragmentary literary remains of the "Qumran" community and the object of so much arcane scholarship, end up in the supermarket check-out aisle? It's a long story, which I will get to later. But this most recent outbreak of interest in the Scrolls can be traced to the mid-1980s, when Hershel Shanks, editor of the *Biblical Archaeology Review*, realized that scrolls from Qumran cave 4—where the community had deposited its library before the destruction of its center by the Romans (A.D. 68)—were being withheld from the public by members of the international team of scholars who were sitting on texts entrusted to them for publication thirty years earlier. This small clique had delayed publication because they wanted to write lengthy commentaries on each text. They were preserving their own turf. Shanks brought the matter to the attention of the public-at-large and began a campaign against such team-tactics. But let's go back to the beginning.

When the scrolls of Qumran Cave 1 were discovered in 1947, they were said to be "the greatest manuscript discovery in modern times." So William Foxwell Albright, renowned Palestinian archaeologist of Johns Hopkins University, hailed them. He did not then know what was yet to come. Within the following decade, ten other Qumran caves yielded written materials, dating from the end of the third century B.C. up to shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem (A.D. 70), and they confirmed his original assessment.

In Cave 1 were discovered seven major scrolls and some seventy other fragmentary Hebrew and Aramaic texts. The major scrolls included two copies of Isaiah, the Manual of Discipline, the War Scroll, Thanksgiving Psalms, a commentary on Habakkuk, and the Genesis Apocryphon. Cave 2 yielded eighteen fragmentary Old Testament texts and fifteen nonbiblical fragments of sectarian writings. From Cave 3 came three fragmentary biblical texts, eleven nonbiblical writings, and a copper plaque recording buried treasures. In Cave 5 were found eight fragmentary Old Testament texts and eighteen nonbiblical writings. Cave 6 yielded seven biblical texts and twenty-four nonbiblical fragments, again of sectarian character. Cave 7 produced a surprise: nineteen Greek fragments, two of biblical writings, and seventeen of contested identification. In Cave 8 were discovered four fragmentary Old Testament texts and one nonbiblical hymn. From Cave 9 came a tiny Hebrew papyrus, and from Cave 10 an ostracon inscribed with a Hebrew name. In all, Caves 1-3, 5-10 yielded 212 documents.

In 1956 Bedouin discovered Cave 11 and rather thoroughly cleaned it out. It yielded twenty-three manuscripts, including a Psalms Scroll, the sectarian Temple Scroll, and others.

Cave 4 (4Q) had been discovered by Bedouin in 1952; they began to clean it out but were eventually stopped by Jordanian authorities so that archaeologists could control the excavation. This cave proved to be most important. From 4Q has come not

"Why this obsession with the remote past, Leo?"

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one complete scroll, but, according to the official report, "at least 15,000 fragments," a highly conservative figure. These fragments were brought to the "scrollery" of the Palestine Archaeological Museum in East Jerusalem; others were bought from the Bedouin. Then began the giant jigsaw puzzle. An international and intercredal team of seven scholars was set up to work on the puzzle and prepare the texts for publication in the Clarendon series, *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert [DJD]*.

By June 1960, 511 4Q texts had been identified; today that number has reached 575. When added to 212 from the minor caves and 23 from Cave 11, the total number of Qumran texts is about 810. About 40 percent of these have seen publication. All the 212 texts from Caves 1-3, 5-10 have been published; most of the 23 texts from Cave 11 have appeared, and the remaining few are to appear shortly.

But 4Q has been the major problem, partly because of their jigsaw puzzle nature. Polish scholar Jozef T. Milik and British scholar John M. Allegro published fifty-nine texts in the definitive *DJD* series, and the Frenchman Maurice Baillet published thirty-nine others. Milik and other members of the team have issued preliminary studies of other 4Q texts. Harvard graduate students have been given 4Q texts for their dissertations, of which about two dozen have been issued in some form. Yet one still awaits the publication of roughly 70 percent of 4Q texts. The delay in the publication of such important documents has created the recent brouhaha about the Scrolls.

Matters came to a head a year ago when, as the *New York Times* (September 5, 1991) headlined it, "Computer Hacker Bootlegs Version of Dead Sea Scrolls." Ben Zion Wacholder and Martin G. Abegg, of Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, had reconstructed 4Q texts from a preliminary concordance of nonbiblical texts. That concordance was begun by me in 1957-58, working as an assistant to the team in the scrollery; the task of putting the words of nonbiblical texts on cards was continued by Raymond E. Brown and Willard G. Oxtoby. In the mid-1980s the cards were photographed and bound into several volumes. A copy of it came to Hebrew Union College, where Wacholder and Abegg used it to reconstruct the texts of as-yet-unpublished 4Q documents. Then the Biblical Archaeology Society of Washington, D.C., published the first fascicle of Wacholder and Abegg's reconstructed texts, *A Preliminary Edition of the Unpublished Dead Sea Scrolls*.

In September 1991, William A. Moffett, director of the Huntington Library in San Marino, California, announced that he would make available to scholars photographs of unpublished texts, of which the library had copies. Though that decision caused a storm of protest—from the scholars to whom the materials had been entrusted and from the Israel Antiquities Authority—nothing could be done about it. Eventually the Israel Antiquities Authority modified its position and permitted scholars access to photographs under its control. In November 1991 the Biblical Archaeology Society published a two-volume *Facsimile Edition of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. Robert H. Eisenman and James M. Robinson), containing 1,787 photographs of 4Q texts. Thus the majority of those documents became available to anyone who could read and decipher them. One might have thought that with this the brouhaha would have died, but no.

In early November 1991, Eisenman claimed that he had discovered among texts made available by the Huntington Library one (4Q285) that "describes a 'leader of the community' being 'put to death' and mentions 'piercings' or 'wounds'...[and] uses messiah-related terms such as 'the staff,' 'the Branch of David' and the 'Root of Jesse'" (the *Washington Post*, September 8, 1991). A press release at that time from the State University of California, Long Beach, where Eiseman teaches, said that "The text is of the most far-reaching significance because it shows that whatever group was responsible for these writings was operating in the same general scriptural and messianic framework of early Christianity." As might have been expected, there is no mention in the text of a "messiah," and the crucial line in it reads, not "they put to death the leader of the community," but "the prince of the congregation will put [or has put] him to death" ("him" being unknown because of the broken state of the fragment). Moreover, it is far from certain that "the Branch of David" (a messianic title used in other Qumran texts), follows as an appositive of "the prince of the congregation," an authority figure otherwise known in Qumran texts, but not as a messiah. Yet even if this text did refer to a messiah, it would simply fit in with other Qumran writings that mention the expectation of "a prophet and the messiahs of Aaron and Israel," a well-known tenet of Qumran eschatology. That it has anything "to do with Christian origins in Palestine" is a figment of Eisenman's imagination.

Then came the humdinger, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Deception* (Summit Books, 1992), by Michael Baigent and Richard Leigh. Inspired by Eisenman's opposition to what he has called the "consensus" among interpreters who hold that the Scrolls have nothing directly to do with Christianity, the authors claim that the real culprit behind the delay in publishing the 4Q texts was the Vatican, which feared that the Scrolls contained material detrimental to Catholic faith and was seeking to suppress such information. Their accusation that the Biblical Commission and Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger were dictating policy to the Catholic members of the international team is ridiculous—sheer humbug! The "deception" in all of this is the Baigent-Leigh book itself. (*See* my article, *America*, February 15, 1992.)

Last June, HarperSan Francisco published Barbara Thiering's latest book, *Jesus and the Riddle of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, a masterpiece of sensationalism (Jesus crucified at Qumran, secretly revived at the Dead Sea, and wed to a woman bishop in A.D. 50)—sheer hokum! It is a classic example of what authors will do to make a buck out of a topic so titillating.

Such a respected journalist as Richard N. Ostling (or his editors) could not resist headlining his article in *Time* (September 21, 1992) "Is Jesus in the Dead Sea Scrolls?" Yet even Ostling had to admit "that none of the Dead Sea Scrolls mentions Jesus by name" and the Qumran "writings...clearly reflect the Jewish situation in the second century before Christ." That the Scrolls might somehow "foreshadow Jesus" (Ostling's thesis) surprises no one acquainted with them. But that 4Q521 refers "to the com-

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ing messiah," says that he "will 'heal the wounded, resurrect the dead [and] preach glad tidings to the poor,'" and thus resembles "the words of Jesus in the Nazareth synagogue (Luke 4)" is another matter. The subject of the preceding sentences in lines 3-5 is not "the messiah," but "the Lord" (*adonay*). The Lord may send a messenger who will do such things, which are described in phrases echoing Isaiah (61:1; 35:5-6; 29:18-19—not messianic passages). That the Qumran community used these phrases in reference to an expected messiah is admissible, but that does not mean that this Qumran text refers to Jesus the Messiah. In short, while you don't expect much from tabloids like the *Sun*, it's remarkable to find such dubious hypotheses retailed by the responsible press.

The significance of the Dead Sea Scrolls is hard to underestimate. In unexpected ways they have contributed to our knowledge in four areas related to the Bible: ancient Palestinian languages (Aramaic, Greek, and Hebrew), the history of ancient Judaism, the transmission of the Old Testament text, and the Jewish background of Christianity.

1. A gap that long existed in our knowledge about the languages of Palestine in the first centuries B.C. and A.D. has now been filled. We have learned much about the trilingualism of the people of that time and place. The Scrolls have also revealed literary activity in Aramaic and Hebrew in the period between the final redaction of the Hebrew Scriptures (ca. 165 B.C.) and the beginning of rabbinic literature (ca. A.D. 200). This is particularly noteworthy for Aramaic. Qumran writings now clearly manifest considerable Aramaic literary creativity: Genesis Apocryphon, Enochic literature, Targum of Job, and other texts of lesser moment.

2. The Scrolls have contributed to our knowledge of ancient Palestinian Judaism. Whether one accepts or not the identification of the Qumran community as Essene, these documents have supplied us with firsthand information about a form of life, a theology, and a mode of biblical interpretation in use among Palestinian Jews from roughly 150 B.C. to A.D. 68. Jewish to the hilt, these pre-Christian Palestinians led an ascetic communal life, with at least some of them celibate. The Scrolls dispel the tendency, once, to refer to the Judaism of this period, especially in its pharisaic-prerabbinic form, as "normative." They give striking support to the account of Josephus about the different "sects" among Palestinian Jews, that is, to the pluriformity of Judaism in his day.

Initially, scholars thought that the Qumran community was Essene. Either such Essenes emerged from the Hasidim ("Pious Ones"), who at first associated with the Maccabees (1 Macc. 2:42), but broke with them when they became more politically oriented and the high priesthood was usurped by one of their kings. Or the Essenes emerged from Jews who had returned from Babylon in the second century, having heard about the success of the Maccabean movement and the restoration of theocracy in the land. Having emigrated from Babylon, they did not find things in "Israel" as ideal or as traditional as expected; so they broke with the Jerusalem priesthood and its tainted Temple-service to withdraw to a desert retreat to establish there "a trustworthy house in Israel."

This Essene identification of the Qumran community has recently been questioned because of text 4QMMT, *miqsat ma ase hattorah*, which is still officially unpublished. A *samizdat* form reveals how it stresses the legal prescriptions which the Qumran Jews insisted on against some opponents. On the basis of this text some have claimed that the community was Sadducee rather than Essene. That identification, however, raises more problems than it solves; the best solution is still the Essene identification.

3. The Scrolls have also taught us much about the history of the transmission of Old Testament texts. Forms of the Hebrew Scriptures found in the Qumran Scrolls now take us back more than a thousand years before the time of the oldest manuscripts known prior to 1947. They attest to the fidelity with which scribes copied the biblical text over the centuries. Isaiah scroll A from Cave 1 preserves all sixty-six chapters, save for a few words lost in some columns, and is dated to 100 B.C. It contributed only thirteen paltry text-changes to the translation of Isaiah in the RSV of 1952. Among the 127 biblical texts of 4Q every book of the Hebrew canon is represented save Esther.

But the texts have also brought to light unsuspected recensions of some biblical books. Fragments of 1-2 Samuel and

Joseph P. Clancy

The Resurrection of the Words

Quiet-voiced ironists still rule the day.
They deconstruct the texts we trusted in.
Those words must end their dancing, come what may.

Their fine contraptions catch no flies. A grey
Mirror is all the spider self can spin.
Quiet-voiced ironists rule the day:

There's no there there to celebrate, they say.
Just as we're on the brink of giving in
Our words insist on dancing, come what may.

They proclaim a world. They bid us to obey
The loves that call us, and the voice within,
Though quiet-voiced ironists may rule the day.

Julian of Norwich heard that Voice gainsay
Despair. She could not doubt its origin.
It set her words to dancing, come what may.

"The worst has already happened," she heard Him say,
"And that has been repaired." Faith's where poems begin.
When quiet-voiced ironists rule the day,
The Word will go on dancing, come what may.

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Jeremiah have revealed forms of these books that differ from the medieval Masoretic text-tradition. One text supplies a shorter Hebrew form of Jeremiah, previously known in the Greek Septuagint. Another text contains the repetitious and expanded form of Exodus previously known in the Samaritan Pentateuch.

4. Perhaps most important of all is the impact that the Scrolls have made on the study of the Palestinian Jewish matrix of Christianity. So far no mention is made in any Qumran document of Christians, of Jesus, or even of John the Baptist, partly because the texts come from pre-Christian centuries, or from the early part of the first Christian century.

In 1972 the Spaniard José O'Callaghan startled the scholarly world by claiming to have identified tiny Greek fragments of Cave 7 as New Testament texts, in particular 7Q5 as Mark 6:52-53. Yet apart from two German writers who have supported O'Callaghan, such an identification of these scraps has fallen on deaf scholarly ears. They are so tiny and contain so few letters that they could be fragments of almost anything. Again, Australian Barbara Thiering has tried to interpret the Qumran texts as speaking covertly of John the Baptist, Jesus, and Christians. For her John would be the Teacher of Righteousness, Jesus the Wicked Priest. But her contentions ride roughshod over archaeological evidence connected with the texts and their palaeographic and radiocarbon dating. Similarly, Robert H. Eisenman has long been ignoring these recognized methods of dating and maintaining "the controversial theory that the Scrolls were written by a Jewish sect that was somehow connected to the movement that spawned Christianity" (the *New York Times*, November 8, 1991). Despite such maverick claims, scholars today recognize that the Scrolls have shed light in unexpected ways on the Palestinian matrix of many things in the New Testament. This should surprise no one, for Jesus of Nazareth was a Palestinian Jew, and the Scrolls furnish firsthand evidence about the milieu in which Christianity came into being.

A Qumran *collection* of beatitudes shows that the way the Matthean and Lucan Jesus uttered the beatitudes in a group (Matt. 5:3-11; Luke 6:20-22) follows a well-established Jewish pattern. Again, the title "Son of God" is used of Jesus in New Testament writings. It occurs, of course, in the Old Testament: for angels, the people of Israel collectively, the king on the Davidic throne, and even for an individual upright Jew. But now this title has turned up in a striking form in a first-century B.C. Aramaic fragment (4Q246). Because the text is broken, the person of whom the title is used is unknown: "[X] shall be great upon the earth, [O King! All (peoples) shall] make [peace], and all shall serve [him. He shall be called the son of] the [G]reat [God], and by his name shall he be named. He shall be hailed the Son of God, and they shall call him Son of the Most High." This text[s] provide the background for Luke 1:32-35, the words of Gabriel to Mary in the infancy narrative.

These four areas, therefore, underscore why the Scrolls merit scholarly attention. But I doubt whether the *Sun*, or Madonna, for that matter, will be interested in such things. And as for some of those who go by the name of scholars, they might just as well publish in the *Sun*. □

SCREEN

SMOKE ON THE HORIZON

'MOHICANS' & 'DRACULA'

I groaned when I found out last summer that it was Michael Mann who was filming the latest adaptation of *The Last of the Mohicans*. What monstrosities would be wrought by the creator of *Miami Vice* and the urban crime movies, *Thief* and *Manhunter*? Hawkeye and Chingachgook dressed in designer buckskins gliding their custom-built canoe past psychedelically lit waterfalls while Whitney Houston sings on the soundtrack? Cooper's slowly unfolding narratives with their Latinate prose and pseudo-Shakespearean set-pieces of conspiracy and noble savage oratory appeal to few readers nowadays but they have their own integrity. It's been years since I waded into a Leatherstocking Tale but they've left pictures in my memory: not only forest combat and redcoats marching but evening sunlight gilding the redoubts of British forts, labyrinthine passageways behind waterfalls, torchlit caves. When I hear the title of a Cooper frontier novel, I think of smoke on the horizon. But smoke on the horizon is likely to dissipate pretty quickly when subjected to in-your-face moviemaking.

I couldn't have been more wrong. There is one pop song used on the soundtrack of the new movie and it's momentarily disastrous. But otherwise Mann has done a beautiful job. This *Last of the Mohicans* is both immediate and elegiac, gorgeous to look at but not embalmed by its own beautiful photography, full of chases, hand-to-hand combat and "hair-breadth scapes i' the imminent deadly breach," yet not lacking in contemplative passages that let you breathe and get to know the characters who will soon enough be in peril again. Mann has made an adventure film that haunts as well as excites. There is smoke on the horizon after all.

The screenplay, concocted by Mann and Christopher Crowe out of both the novel and the 1936 Randolph Scott movie, rearranges the book's love rivalries, relieves Natty Bumppo of his indifference to sex, disparages the British colonial policies with a vigor that Cooper never employed, kills off characters that the author spared, spares some that he dispatched, and, by necessity, speeds up and streamlines the plot. Yet this version captures an element of Cooper's vision that is indispensable to the special magic of the story.

That element is sylvan. The huge, all-encompassing forest that is the New York State of 1757 (beautifully impersonated by North Carolina's woodlands as photographed by Dante Spinotti) is much more than the backdrop to the action. It is a virtual presence that threatens to absorb everything human that ventures near. This forest is never shot in a melodramatically forbidding way but, though we are given lovely glimpses of waterfalls and ravines, there is nothing idyllic about it either. It is simply engulfing.

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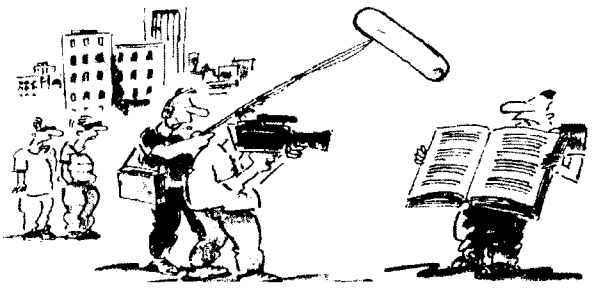
At the film's conclusion, three lone survivors stand on a cliff gazing at the same mountainous, misty woodland that filled the very first shot of the movie. All three have lost their families to frontier violence: a recently orphaned young woman, her lover orphaned virtually at birth, and a middle-aged warrior, the last of his tribe, who has just witnessed, in the death of his son, the termination of his bloodline. The wilderness seems to invite these three to enter it, be absorbed by it. And they will because they have lost their pasts. There is romantic, call-of-the-wild nihilism in this movie that is alien to the deeply conservative Cooper, who always balanced the claims of natural man against the demands of civilization. But, in this movie sentimental primitivism has its charm.

(Alas, Mann is most faithful to Cooper in his depiction of the interracial affair between Uncas and one of Colonel Munro's daughters as a coming together of handsome statues rather than lifelike lovers. As in the book, this approach weakens the tragic climax of the story.)

Mann's direction is beautifully flexible. A quarrel between a British commander and his colonial militia is rendered in a long shot that is as balanced in composition and lighting as an eighteenth-century historical painting. But, just when we are becoming too aware of the academic groupings, Mann cuts in to the faces of the disputants and the acceleration keeps the scene alive. But Mann is also a master of the unexpected delay. When Hawkeye covers a messenger's flight through enemy lines by firing from a stockade rampart, the scene is of course staged rapidly with each of the courier's assailants picked off just before they strike. However, as Hawkeye takes aim at the last attacker, Mann first slowly pans his camera along the barrel of the marksman's rifle, then finally cuts to the hammer sticking; we hear the shot, see the messenger running, but also see his attacker still alive, still in motion, and about to strike. *Then* the bullet finds it mark. This second or so of delay not only adds a jot of suspense but makes us feel the epic status of Hawkeye as a marksman: slowly, slowly, his bullets wend through the air but always, always, they hit the mark.

Daniel Day-Lewis has the longest, narrowest face and the broadest, richest talent of his acting generation. He is as versatile as Guinness but has a sexual magnetism that Guinness never possessed. His performance here as Hawkeye is so contained that the *New Yorker*'s move critic labeled it a "visual phenomenon." But it seems to me that Hawkeye has learned from the Indians he has lived among to conceal his thoughts and emotions. Day-Lewis's triumph is to make nondemonstrativeness magnetic. And when Bumppo is compelled by circumstances to betray extreme emotion, the actor delivers. Listen to his voice as he pleads with his lover, about to fall into enemy hands, to "Stay alive! I will find you!" Above the roar of a waterfall, Day-Lewis's voice cracks with urgency and defiance of despair. This is no visual phenomenon; it's acting of a high order. As Hawkeye's lover, Madeleine Stowe is so beautiful that she too invites the injustice of being taken as visual treat and nothing more. Hers is an achieved portrait of a woman of great delicacy who, finding herself in the midst of hell, summons the strength to survive without surrendering that delicacy. In the supporting cast two performers deserve comment: the famous stage director Patrice Chereau for making General Montcalm a perfect mixture of delicacy and imperiousness, and Wes Studi for going way beyond political correctness in creating a villain, the treacherous Magua, whose ability to cherish hatred is at one, in his own mind, with the pride he takes in his race. A very serious and unostentatious monster.



"They're making the film of the book."

Michael Mann must have loved *The Last of the Mohicans* when he was a boy. He hasn't been very faithful to Fenimore Cooper's storytelling, but I hazard that he has been very faithful indeed to the daydreams that Cooper once gave him.

Call it The Law of Pyrotechnics as Applied to Cinema. At every good fireworks display I've attended, the masters of sparklers and rockets have been careful to keep their launches decidedly uneven in beauty and volume. A heaven-storming explosion is followed by a mere crack and trickle of fire, that trickle by a fair amount of thunder, and that thunder by another Jovian upburst. The result is an audience kept in a state of constant, pleasurable anticipation.

In *Bram Stoker's Dracula*, Francis Ford Coppola shoots off one stunner after another. The camera races up and down the steps of castles and ships, scarlet scarves swirl in the wind, the Count turns not only into a bat but into a werewolf and a gargoyle, bodies fly through the air, blood geysers, Professor Von Helsing cries on like Rumpelstiltskin (frightful overacting by the great Anthony Hopkins), possessed women vomit torrents of blood (shades—scarlet shards instead of pea-green—of *The Exorcist*!!), heads are lopped off in close-up. The result isn't exactly tedium because it's sometimes fun to watch Uncle Frank's magic show. But one gets tired of him shouting "Presto!" every twenty seconds. If only he would calm down and simply tell the old story in a way that would convince us that he had once read the book as a boy and been thrilled by it. In Murnau's great *Nosferatu*, the discovery of Dracula crawling head-first down his sheer castle wall was an unsettling sight because it emerged out of an atmosphere of hushed, subdued foreboding. But the same sight in Coppola's film, though no less well-executed technically, is ineffective because it's just one more freak-show stunt following and preceding scores of other stunts.

There is no conviction in this movie, only gore and camp. And since every single shot announces its own expensiveness, the overall result is distasteful. Camp loses its playfulness when it costs this much.

RICHARD ALLEVA

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The horror, the horror

A COMPLICATED WAR
The Harrowing of Mozambique
William Finnegan
University of California Press. $25, 325 pp.

Rand Richards Cooper

In 1975, Portugal granted independence to the colony of Mozambique, in Southern Africa on the Indian Ocean. The transition was a hasty, bitter one, following a decade of armed conflict between the Portuguese and the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique, or Frelimo, whose military leader, Samora Machel, became the new nation's first president. A Marxist-Leninist organization allied with the Soviet Union and Cuba, Frelimo inherited an impoverished land twice the size of California, with no industrial base and an illiteracy rate of over 90 percent. Its difficulties running the country echo the sad story of many of Africa's young and desperate nations: an ambitious, ill-planned rush to industrialization; nationalization of industries and subsequent capital flight; dangerous over-reliance on exports, like coffee, subject to wild price fluctuations; agriculture schemes that forced collectivization and relocation on unwilling peasants; then the mid-seventies' shock of oil prices, a high birthrate and spiraling unemployment, mounting external debt, deterioration of currency and infrastructure, the post-cold war withdrawal of superpower patronage, and a seemingly terminal reliance on international donor aid.

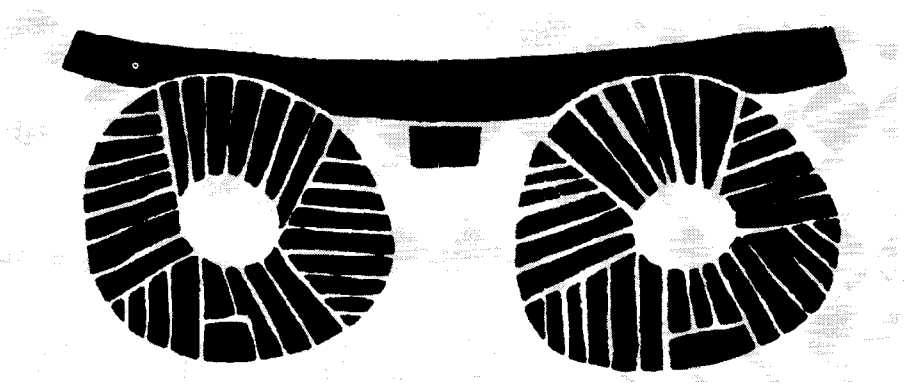
In Mozambique, the situation has been aggravated by the cruel caprices both of nature—a drought in the early eighties killed an estimated 100,000, and another now threatens a fifth of the population of 16 million with starvation—and of the National Resistance of Mozambique, or Renamo, a guerrilla group which for the past fifteen years has waged a disorganized but crippling war against the Frelimo government. This war and the "annihilative frenzy" it has visited upon the country are the subject of William Finnegan's book, *A Complicated War: The Harrowing of Mozambique*.

A Complicated War has the form of an African travelogue, and features some of the subgenre's standard elements: the difficulty of getting from place to place; the pervasiveness of the supernatural in the form of fetishists, healers, and a widespread belief in the immortality of one's enemies; the seductive beauty of the landscape; the eccentric expats and horrid hotels. Finnegan, a staff writer for the *New Yorker* (where large parts of this book originally appeared) and the author of two previous books about Southern Africa, is very good at all of this. He knows how to use the right detail to make his calm and stately prose vibrate with pity, irony, or terror, as the case requires. Here he is, for instance, describing his hotel in Beira, a city on the coast where week-long power failures were the norm:

> The Hotel Dom Carlos had its own generator, but that failed sometimes, too. In the elevator, the thick glass panels on the doors had been smashed from the inside at every floor by desperate passengers trapped by power failures. When I mentioned this eerie sight to a Beiran, he said I was crazy to get in an elevator anywhere in the city. Even aging asthmatics who worked on the tenth floor of downtown high rises that still had a working elevator used the stairs.

The picture Finnegan paints of Mozambique is one of extreme poverty and isolation. He learns to distinguish between children who are merely hungry, children who are malnourished, and children who are starving. He visits towns that have been cut off by war, reachable only by air, for five years, and interviews refugees, or *deslocados*, whose answers reveal startling gaps in the kind of factual knowledge any citizen of a Western society takes absolutely for granted. Among the things some of his interviewees have never *heard* of are America, South Africa, apartheid, or Joaquim Chissano, the president of their own country—though one man, "given four names to choose from, chose the right one."

It's a little surreal, the prospect of the eager American traipsing across the savannah, giving bewildered refugees multiple choice quizzes on their own government. The point, one takes it, is to show how the new, modern nation-states of Africa, drawn up by Europeans in ig-



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norance of local ethnic allegiances, have failed to etch themselves into the loyalties and even the consciousnesses of many of their citizens.

A second, related point is the total irrelevance of the guerrilla war in Mozambique to anything its victims care about, other than survival. While wars like the one currently raging in the Balkans arise from centuries of conflict among antagonistic neighbors, where "culture" often turns out to be a crowded agenda of unforgotten evils and murderous grudges, Finnegan's African interviewees, infinitely less "tribalistic" than the tribes of the Balkans, appear as mere sufferers in a pointless power struggle between a guerrilla group they can't see and a government whose president they can't name. Renamo, Frelimo: even the words sound interchangeable. Who were those men with guns standing by that burning vehicle? No one is sure; it doesn't really matter. A war like this is "complicated," paradoxically, because it is so simple.

There's no doubt where the author's own sympathies lie. Finnegan assesses Frelimo's stewardship of Mozambique with extreme generosity and a notable enthusiasm for the rhetoric of revolution. (The Frelimo leadership, he writes, is "remarkably self-critical," "powerfully disciplined, unusually mature," "deeply committed," and so on.) It would be hard to concoct a blander apology for Marxism than Finnegan's assertion that confrontations in the late 1960s with antiwhite, ultra-Africanist factions "compelled [the racially mixed Frelimo leadership] to declare the primacy of a class analysis."

Finnegan is right to acknowledge the vastness of the problems a young nation like Mozambique inherited from its colonial masters, and one would surely rather have his sympathetic account than the type of commentary about Africa one encounters in American newsmagazines these days, with its *basso ostinato* of complacent superiority. But he doesn't help his credibility any by prefacing a brief description of Frelimo's notorious re-education camps with the reminder that "democratic constraint on the arbitrary use of power is a hard-won (and never-complete, and never secure) condition in any society," or by informing us—apparently without irony—that the Frelimo politburo, in a soccer game against a local professional team, showed admiring citizens how "the country's leaders had retained the precision passing skills developed in the *luta armada*." It makes him seem like a rearguard PR man for Frelimo and for third-world Marxism generally: the traveler as fellow traveler.

Of Renamo, there seems to be little good to say. Organized in the late 1970s, the author details, out of former Portuguese soldiers, disgruntled Frelimo deserters, and common thieves, masterminded by Rhodesian intelligence, Renamo has been funded both by South Africa and wealthy Portuguese, and functions in part, according to Finnegan, as a "blunt instrument of South African policy." (Its repeated attacks on rail lines in Mozambique, for instance, have forced neighboring countries to ship exports through South African ports.)

The group's international reputation has been bleak, a fact evidenced by its failure, despite apparent similarities to the Nicaraguan *contras* or the Unita rebels in Angola, to procure funding from Washington, even during the boom years of the Reagan administration. Finnegan relates how attempts were made, by Jesse Helms in Congress and by players in the Ollie North sideshow, but broke up on the shoals of Renamo's abominable human rights record. The writer Michael Dorris has reported children being forced at gunpoint to execute their parents; Finnegan tells in ghastly detail the story of a *mutilado* peasant named Galave, an accused spy whom Renamo guerrillas tortured by hacking off his nose, lips, hand, and ear, the last of which they forced him to chew and swallow. "The cruelty of Renamo," the author writes, "mesmerized everyone in Mozambique."

Admittedly mesmerized himself, Finnegan tells of becoming "obsessed with developing an accurate picture of life with Renamo." One of the disappointments of *A Complicated War* is that this picture never develops. Finnegan never succeeds in making direct contact with Renamo guerrillas; he's forced to go all the way back to Washington to interview a vain

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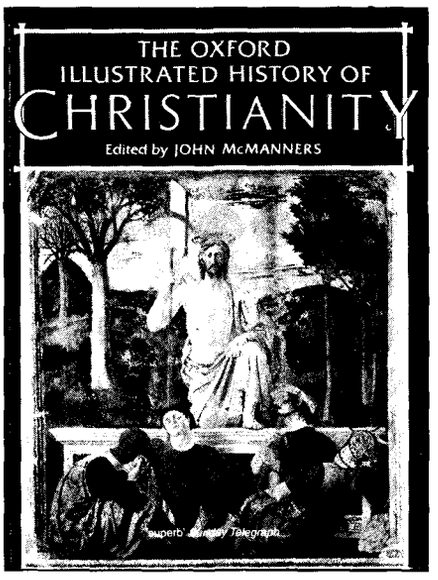

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and frivolous Howard University professor who functions as Renamo's American representative. Thus while we get sympathetic, well-drawn portraits of Frelimo activists, Renamo remains the mysterious *bandito armadas*, by turns murderous and bumbling. Is Renamo solely an arm of South African policy? No. Is it merely a tool of the exiled Portuguese elite? No. Does it to any extent serve the coherent interests of some kind of ideological dissent? Not likely. By the end of *A Complicated War*, we have some idea what Renamo isn't, but not much idea what it is.

Ultimately, Finnegan lumps Renamo in with what the East African scholar Ali Mazrui calls an emergent "lumpen militariat" in Africa, nonideological militias intent on feeding themselves—literally—by controlling the means of destruction. "The commonest reason for joining Renamo," he writes, "was hunger: with a gun in hand, one's chances of eating in rural Mozambique were clearly better than they were without it." This makes sense, and one is tempted to leave *A Complicated War* with the lesson that hunger and the scarcity of resources are the ultimate forces behind Renamo and the endless war.

But what, then, about the *mutilado* with no lips and nose, and what about the men who tortured him? Where does this seemingly gratuitous violence come from, what does it mean? Finnegan's closing chapter (his end notes, by the way, are detailed and helpful throughout) lengthily engages the ideas of Hobsbawm and others concerning social banditry, but by no means does his discussion attain the level of horror raised by the mere telling of the *mutilado*'s story. One's thoughts keep returning also to the *deslocados* who don't know their own ages, or the name of the town they lived in for two years, or the president of their country. Journalism can establish that such people exist; but it has a much tougher time bringing us imaginatively any closer to understanding *how*.

In V.S. Naipaul's novel *A Bend in the River*—another book about mysterious rebels and a complicated postcolonial war—we repeatedly encounter Africans whose sense of self and place in the world has been severely damaged by the rude shocks of colonialism and of war. We encounter them, however, not only as collections of deficits, but as agents, as people with a world view, however distorted or deranged or brutal, and the ability to assert themselves, usually erratically, into relations with others. Naipaul's frightening inquiry suggests that the violence of postcolonial society represents both a furious inner nihilism and a kind of belated historical revenge, a rage against the "memory of the intruder." This may or may not be—the theses are open to doubt—and yet what's wholly persuasive is the way a reader experiences the idea enacted in the minds and actions of Naipaul's characters. One sees the horror from the inside, as it were, and travels through the novel increasingly (and anxiously) expectant of depredation. One leaves Finnegan's book, on the other hand, thinking about the lipless man and asking, "How could they have done that to him?" And thus the vague feeling that *A Complicated War* does not quite rise to the task it has taken on, that the author's travels have raised more questions than he can account for.

It's the difference, perhaps, between interviewing people and creating them. Busy with interviews, concerned with relevant scholarship, constrained (as a conscientious journalist) by the facts, Finnegan is finally not quite able to create a moral and psychological atmosphere in which the lipless man and the *deslocados* are at home. Finally, of course, it's not fair to complain that Finnegan hasn't written a novel, and readers interested in third-world politics will appreciate his book for the resourceful work of political journalism that it is. *A Complicated War* takes us part way down an exceedingly bleak and wretched road; should we wish to go further, we need a novelist, a Coetzee or a Gordimer or a Naipaul, to take us even further into the shadows. □

WHO DEFINES THE SITUATION?

GENEROUS LIVES
American Catholic Women Today
Jane Redmont
William Morrow and Company, $21, 367 pp.

Patricia Windsor

Jane Redmont's *Generous Lives* was "timed to coincide with the 1992 Bishops' Pastoral Letter on Women," says a publisher's note on the back of the galleys. Ironically, the timing offers an opportunity to compare two approaches to women's concerns—one successful (Redmont's) and one (the bishops') whose credibility problems eventually overwhelmed and defeated a well-meaning enterprise.

Redmont, who has a master's in divinity from Harvard Divinity School, uses lengthy interviews with more than a hundred Catholic women of all stripes to explore the question: "How contemporary women define their religion." Redmont discovers that "what these women who call themselves Catholic actually believe—and how they live—defies easy correlation with the dictums of the church."

This, at least in part, was what the U.S. Catholic bishops discovered when they set out to draft a pastoral letter ten long years ago. In the earliest drafts, women's voices—some contradicting church teaching, others defending it—received prominent play. But subsequent drafts muffled those voices, while amplifying and explicating church teachings such as the ban on women's ordination. Besieged by objections from both sides of the ideological spectrum, the bishops failed to muster the two-thirds majority vote needed to pass the pastoral at their November '92 meeting.

Redmont's volume, by contrast, not only tolerates the gray areas that color so many women's lives, but celebrates them. The author intersperses women's stories—told in their voices—with chapters

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on key aspects of the church and life through Catholic women's eyes. The author does not exclude the "experts" often quoted in the press; but most of the women interviewed could be your doctor, your coworker, or the homemaker next door.

The book is refreshingly honest. It may therefore disappoint conservatives hunting for "radical feminists," or progressives expecting women to clearly reject the trappings of ecclesial power. The cross-section of women here is anything but stereotypical; their views reflect the contradictions so often ignored in debates about the church, and yet so much a part of our lives. As Redmont puts it, "I found that the lines between religious or political liberals and conservatives were not as clearly drawn as the media or our own hasty descriptions of each other would have us believe."

The author invites readers into the lives of women who are black, Hispanic, Asian, and white, old and young, married and single, heterosexual and lesbian, poor and rich, urban and rural. Among them: A corporate executive who disagrees with the bishops' "let government do it" economic pastoral, but supports women's ordination; a mother who sees nuclear arms as necessary for defense, but says priests should be allowed to marry; a community organizer who thinks the church should spend more on scholarships for lay people but opposes women's ordination; a grandmother who wants abortion banned but is open to women priests.

Many other women—who include a police officer, a journalist, a nun, a theologian, and an ex-convict—are woven into chapters examining topics such as sexuality, work, social justice, and image of God (most women see God as more a "being" than a person).

Of the more than one hundred women interviewed by Redmont, almost none supports the church's ban on contraception; only half support its teachings on abortion, homosexuality, and divorce. Yet they struggle with these issues, especially abortion, where women's views reflected a mixture of prolife and prochoice sentiments rarely captured in press coverage of the debate. Most morally opposed abortion, yet many felt it should remain legal.

If there is one area where dissatisfaction is most acute among the women in Redmont's book, it is divorce. To a person, the divorced women in this book spoke of their pain. Some said they stayed in abusive relationships because of church teaching. But others found healing through the church's annulment process. A few fully supported church teaching on divorce and remarriage, with one woman arguing the church had become too lenient.

All these women, despite their differences with the church and with each other, share a commitment to doing good in the world. Thus the title *Generous Lives*. Redmont introduces a woman who has adopted children, another involved in social activism in San Antonio, and another who struggles with being a Christian in the corporate world.

Generous Lives has a "ring of truth" some found lacking in the drafts of the bishops' pastoral. In many ways, Redmont's portrait has a richness that necessarily eluded the bishops, who had to balance women's concerns with church pronouncements. Indeed, even within Red-

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mont's volume, it is the women's voices that speak most powerfully; the non-narrative chapters tend to be slow-moving.

By the way, the author seems to go overboard with footnotes, anticipating a non-Catholic audience it seems unlikely the book will attract. There are definitions of "pastor" and "ecumenism," for example. Then again, footnotes on the rosary and on the church's teaching on divorce and remarriage may prove enlightening for the growing number of us who missed the *Baltimore Catechism*.

Perhaps the secret to Redmont's book is buried in a short quote from Marie Augusta Neal, SND, in the preface: "Who defines the situation?" Redmont lets women define themselves, and then lets the chips fall where they may. Perhaps it was too much to expect the U.S. bishops to do the same.

Redmont's effort may not get the broad readership the footnotes suggest, but it ought to find a place in Catholic seminaries and on the shelves of anyone involved in ministry. Most of all, it's a book for Catholic women who wrestle with what it means to be a Catholic amid the curves life so often throws. Many will find a bit of themselves in these pages. □

DUBIOUS NOTION, BRILLIANT DEFENDER

LOOSE CANONS
Notes on the Culture Wars
Henry Louis Gates, Jr.
Oxford University Press, $19.95, 199 pp.

David Castronovo

Henry Louis Gates, Jr. is a scholar and essayist in the field of Afro-American literature who has brio, deep learning, and wit. While being something of an ideologue on the literary canon and the injustices of the Western tradition, he is also a gift to his readers and a rarity in contemporary critical circles: he is a spokesman for radical revision in the humanities who is not lathered up and driven by resentment. After a year at Duke University during which he was subjected to various kinds of small-minded criticism, he was offered the W.E.B. DuBois Professorship in the Humanities at Harvard and the opportunity to redirect a languishing program in black studies. The central concerns of his career have been the discovery of black literary texts, the analysis of these works, and their incorporation into the world community of letters. Such enterprises, of course, should be placed under the general heading of multiculturalism, a conception of literary culture and education which Gates defends against abuse as he writes about a "polycentric" canon of books. Gates feels that this breaking down of literary and intellectual hierarchies—this "de-centering"—is inevitable given a world "profoundly fissured by nationality, ethnicity, race, class, and gender."

One of Professor Gates's major works, *The Signifying Monkey* (Oxford), is an impressive and wide-ranging demonstration of his views. The study is a pioneering analysis of Afro-American and other black language patterns, metaphors, and rhetorical strategies as they appear in literature ranging from folktales to novels by Ralph Ellison and Ishmael Reed. The monkey in this title is a trickster figure in the myths of Africa and the New World who provides a new and ironic voice through his cutting and humorous "signifying." *Loose Canons* is frequently sharp and irreverent as it explores Gates's favorite issues: minority voices in the West, the intransigence of fogeys and leftists in the universities, the relationship of high-flown literary theory to practical living and progress. In dismissing the positions of the Plato scholar and traditionalist Allan Bloom and the radical professor Leonard Jeffries in one sentence, Gates shows his relish for controversy and imaginative yokings. Altogether, his essays—gathered under the section headings of "Literature," "The Profession," and "Society"—are about as far as one can get from the typical volume of edited academic papers. The reader will laugh a good deal, find out many interesting things about minority discourse, and very likely be exhilarated and irritated within the frame of a chapter.

Gates makes mincemeat out of politicians who cry crocodile tears over the decline of traditional values in education: "you have to imagine James Baker curling up with the *Four Quartets*, Dan Quayle leafing through the *Princess Cassimassima*. I suppose this is the vision, anyway. What's wrong with this picture?" His chapter called "Canon Confidential" is a send-up of the why-we-read-the-classics brouhaha. Detective Sam Slade finds out the traditional literary canon is a protection racket, that the big time critics like Harold Bloom at Yale are thugs who knock off "Tommy" (T.S.) Eliot, and that if you look further you discover Jason Epstein of Random House protecting his backlist. Gates includes another somewhat less clever Sam Slade piece called "The Big Picture" about Ted Turner buying up classic works for television: there will be a high-speed chase at the end of Emerson's *Journals*; Madonna will star in James's *Daisy Miller*.

One of the master themes in the book is the abuse of power in the realm of communication and the ways in which everyone from Jefferson to Ted Turner can fool us. Acting as a kind of cultural environmentalist, Gates exposes the offenders and proposes solutions. "Writing, 'Race,' and

REVIEWERS

RAND RICHARDS COOPER *spent several years working and traveling in Africa. He has written for the* New York Times *and* The Atlantic, *among other publications.*

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DAVID CASTRONOVO *has written books on literary and cultural subjects, including his latest volume* The American Gentleman *(Continuum). He is a professor of English at Pace University in New York City.*

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"I don't care if it is part of your cultural heritage!"

the Difference It Makes" highlights the Age of Reason's most unreasoning attitudinizing. Jefferson, Hume, and Kant are caught at their worst, writing absurd and offensive things about the paucity and inferiority of black writers. Unfortunately Gates's excellent point about black authors writing themselves into existence against this backdrop of rank bigotry is marred by his sloppy attacks on authority and the value of white male teachers. He seems to think that Alice Walker's fairly obvious male bashing in *The Color Purple* is a great moment in literature and a way out of "interpretive indenture." He also neglects to show readers that Kant's opinion-mongering and nonsense commentary, like Ezra Pound's political ranting, is not philosophy at all and does not speak as loudly as well-structured argument. Of course there are reassurances from Gates: he has trouble tolerating fanatical antitraditionalists, victimization trendies, and other ideologues. But this volume does little to further DuBois's noble vision of intellectual sharing: "I sit with Shakespeare, and he winces not. Across the color line I move arm and arm with Balzac and Dumas, where smiling men and welcoming women glide in gilded halls."

Gates makes several friendly remarks about the Western humanistic tradition and the idea of outreach. He quotes John Henry Newman on the liberally educated mind and its capacity to view many things as a whole; he claims to believe in a "middle way" between black nationalistic literary culture and Western humanism. But ultimately it all comes down to his suspicion of the pursuit of "knowledge for its own sake." Gates simple doesn't believe that such a pursuit is any more than a mask for partisanship. *Loose Canons*—like many postmodern works influenced by French theory—is essentially disdainful of humanism and immersed, for all its good humor, in the by now fairly tired notion that literature and ideas of literary quality are products of domination. Literature is "the most pervasive emblem of capitalist commodity functions." True enough, Gates is above the level of cant about Dead White Males like Plato who knew all the right people. But his insistence on the primacy of the power drive in literary history drowns out other considerations and makes this book seem unconcerned with such hopelessly old-fashioned things as the beauty and spiritual value of great literature.

The imperatives of Gates's work are not likely to be congenial to readers who are distrustful of or indifferent to collective attitudes. In our century very different minds have recoiled from the idea of harnessing creative work to political beliefs. In the best tradition of Marxist literary analysis and appreciation, Leon Trotsky could not bring himself to believe in proletarian literature as a meaningful category. In the late 1940s the art critic Harold Rosenberg announced that he felt no affinity for the political ideas of his generation. In the 1980s the novelist Milan Kundera rejected the "Grand March" toward freedom—the insistent rhetoric of the Left—and found it so much hot air that contributed to "the unbearable lightness of being." Literature goes its own way and has its own laws of being. Very likely there are many lovers of books today who will perceive the clarion call of multiculturalism as just another chilling demand. To them Professor Gates will seem to be a brilliant advocate of a questionable position. □

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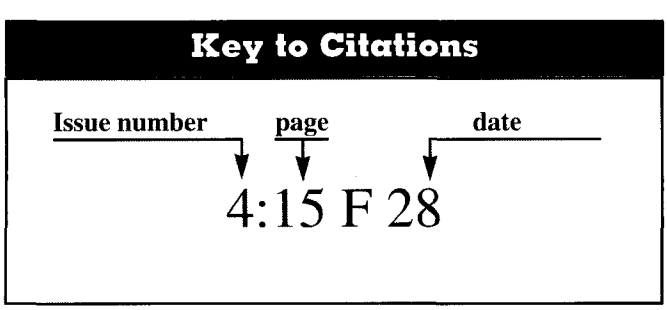

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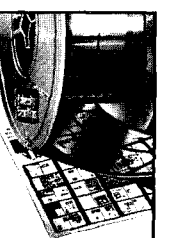

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CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 2)

The reviewer replies:

I would not want to reply to the *ad hominem* arguments of the Rev. Richard Neuhaus; such responses rarely raise the level of discourse. It may be helpful, however, to elucidate my assertion that his interpretation of *Centesimus annus* is in discontinuity with the rest of Catholic social teaching, including Pope John Paul II's previous contributions to that body of doctrine.

Neuhaus himself (on page 137) talks of such discontinuity when he notes that Pope John Paul II in *Centesimus annus* quotes the major works on social doctrine of his immediate predecessors—namely, *Pacem in terris*, *Mater et magistra*, and *Populorum progressio*—only seven times. I bolster my assertion by the fact that Neuhaus in his interpretation seldom refers to the present pope's own earlier works. He discusses *Laborem exercens* only once, and does so negatively. *Sollicitudo rei socialis* is cited four times, but twice because the pope is referring to his own quote. Neuhaus also refers to *Gaudium et spes* of Vatican Council II only twice in his book, once because the pope cites that document himself (page 183) and a second time where he cites it negatively (page 168). These references should be sufficient to show that Neuhaus's interpretation of *Centesimus annus* is in discontinuity with previous Catholic social teaching, including that of the present pope.

I fail to see in paragraph 40 of *Centesimus annus* that Pope John Paul II is approving of "new" as opposed to "primitive" capitalism. In that context those terms are used to distinguish two historical periods. What the pope is defending is the "task of the state to provide for the defense and preservation of common goods such as the natural and human environments, which cannot be safeguarded simply by market forces."

I would recall that Pope John Paul deals with distributive justice in paragraph 8 of *Centesimus annus*. Father Neuhaus may not have noticed that passage.

(MOST REV.) REMBERT G. WEAKLAND, O.S.B.

What the pope said

Pasadena, Calif.

To the Editors: Thank you for running Edward L. Cleary's article "John Paul II Cries 'Wolf'" [November 20] with its treatment of important issues affecting the relationship between Roman Catholics and Pentecostals worldwide. Like Cleary, I was taken aback by the strong language ("rapacious wolves") the pope used in his reference to the sects and pseudospiritual movements in his address to bishops in the Dominican Republic. Again, Cleary's concern over the misuse of the term "sect" when applied to all Pentecostals is well taken. The term is easily misunderstood at the grassroots level and by many in the secular media.

It is true that there are some sectarians within the Pentecostal movement, as there have been in recent years in the Roman Catholic church. But the majority of the Pentecostal movement, I would contend, is not sectarian. Similarly, the charge of proselytism against Pentecostals is misinformed. It may well be that some Pentecostals engage in proselytism, but if proselytism is defined as stealing the sheep of another church the overwhelming majority of Pentecostals are opposed to it.

Pentecostals in many parts of the world have been concerned about the spiritual welfare of so-called "nominal" or "cultural" Christians, persons who were baptized as infants, perhaps even confirmed, but who appear in church only for their weddings and funerals. Pentecostals worry about the need for decisive evangelization, continuing discipleship, and an abundance of fruit, indicative of the transforming power of God in the lives of Christians.

Thus, rereading the pope's Santo Domingo speech I was heartened by his clear admission that many Catholics in Latin America are not receiving adequate feeding from their church. Factors such as the shortage of priests, the lack of personal formation, inconsistency in the lives of some pastoral leaders are cited as contributing to this reality.

I was particularly struck by John Paul II's solution to the problem of the fleeing sheep, a problem from which Latin Amer-

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ican Pentecostals have benefited. "Where the church's presence is dynamic," he observed, "such as in parishes where there is a steady formation in the word of God, where the liturgy is active and people participate, where there is a solid Marian piety, true solidarity in the social field, a notable pastoral concern for the family, youth, and the sick," there is an antidote to the threats that "sects" might otherwise pose.

Apart from the reference to Marian piety, the pope's solution is precisely what Pentecostals and Evangelicals have advocated throughout this century. Bible study, spiritual formation, social concern, pastoral care given in a loving context where people join in to sing, to pray, to read Scripture, to testify of their diverse experiences of God's action in their lives, to worship, to be exhorted, and to share with others from their own abundance no matter how meager, cannot help but make a stronger church and a dynamic force for God in an increasingly secularized world. In short, despite the unfortunate reference to "rapacious wolves," there is very little to distinguish the pope's recommendations to his bishops from the policies Evangelicals and Pentecostals would urge on them if given half a chance.

CECIL M. ROBECK, JR.

The writer is associate professor of church history and ecumenics at Fuller Theological Seminary and co-chair of the International Roman Catholic-Pentecostal Dialogue.

Cuomo & Kohl

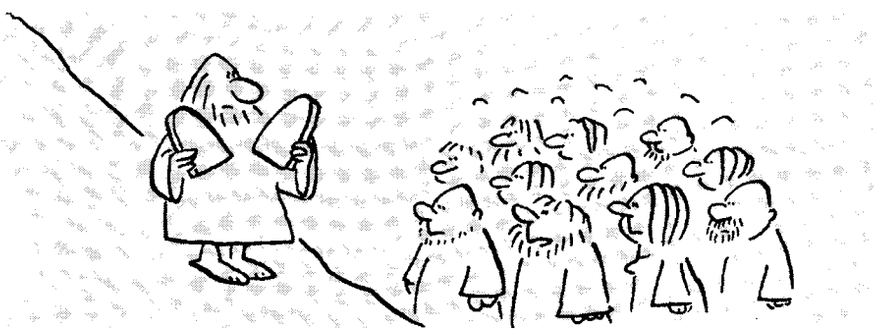
New York, N.Y.

To the Editors: We are not, my friends, going to reverse *Roe* v. *Wade*. *Commonweal*'s columns make that point clearly. Thus, Catholic politicians who take both their faith and their profession seriously must seek instead to mitigate the ruling in as persuasive a way as possible. Thus, to read Mario Cuomo and Pat Moynihan out of the club for their stands on abortion is, at least, shortsighted. I've never read Moynihan's justification for his position, but his work for a society that provides for all of its citizens would, if carried through, do quite as much to limit abortions as does Operation Rescue—indeed, more.

Cuomo's Notre Dame speech on the topic was based on a profoundly Christian understanding of communal justice: a law the wealthy can flout with impunity, though the poor must obey it, is a bad law. He has been as consistent in following the principle he enunciated as he has been in vetoing his legislature's demands for the death penalty.

What makes Michael Hunt's criticism of the governor's stance ["Really Catholic but Electable," October 23] even more debatable is that Helmut Kohl, one of his exemplars of the Catholic politician, is pretty much in accord with Cuomo in matters of abortion. Mary Ann Glendon, during her appearance on PBS with Bill Moyers, said that in an interview with Kohl she had asked what Germany did about abortion. His answer was that the country offered a woman every inducement it could—e.g., maternity leave, money, housing help, etc.—to persuade her to bear her child. But if she still thought she could not, the state helped her to an abortion. Cuomo has a hard time finding that many inducements, but that's not his fault. It is the result of innate American stinginess to its own—a stinginess raised to the level of principle in the past twelve years.

MARIAN BURKHART



"Those are nice answers, but we don't remember asking the questions."

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